



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08159620 1

The
Gordon Lester Ford
Collection
Presented by his Sons
Worthington Chauncy Ford
and
Paul Leicester Ford
to the
New York Public Library.

BAC
Sketches

Charles M. Fairton
Colchester - Connecticut

SKETCHES July 26th

T
OF 1867

UNIVERSAL HISTORY,

COMPILED FROM SEVERAL AUTHORS:

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS.

.....
VOL. II.
.....

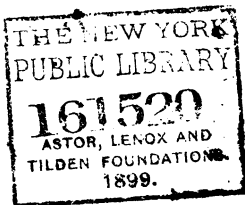
FIRST EDITION.

NEW-HAVEN:
PRINTED BY J. BARBER.

.....
1816.

EPB

75



DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT, ss.

L. S. **B**E it Remembered, That on the thirtieth day of October, in the thirty-sixth year of the independence of the United States of America, Joseph Barber, of said District hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit :

“ Sketches of Universal History, compiled from several authors, for the use of Schools.”

In conformity to an act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “ An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.”

H. W. EDWARDS,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

A true copy of Record, examined and sealed by me,

H. W. EDWARDS,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

Universal History, &c.



CHAP. I.

The History of Israel during the Life of Joshua.

QUESTION. Did the Israelites take immediate possession of the promised land at the death of Moses?

Answer. They mourned a full month for their venerable legislator; then at the command of God, they prepared to pass over Jordan to take possession of Canaan. But previous to their departure, Joshua sent two men as spies, to procure the best information of the natural and political strength of the country, which they were about to attack; and particularly to gain a knowledge of the passages which led to the city of Jericho. It is probable that this measure was adopted from some intimation of the Divine will to Joshua, and not through distrust of the promises, as seemed to be the case with the twelve sent by Moses; consequently these spies rendered an important service to their country, and were guided and protected in a peculiar manner by providence.

Q. What happened to those men who went to search the land?

A. Having passed the fords of Jordan, (that river not having yet overflowed its banks, as it did soon after—B.C. 1451,) they entered Jericho, and obtained lodging at the house of a woman called Rahab, who probably kept an house of entertainment for travellers, and who had been an harlot, but at this time appears to have become a good woman.—Her faith in the promises of God led her to entertain the spies, and to conceal them from the king of Jericho, who having been informed that two Israelites had entered the city, sent to apprehend them.

Q. In what manner did Rahab elude the king's vigilance?

A. She hid the spies beneath some stalks of flax, which were laid on the roof of her house; and when the king's messengers came to demand the men, she led them to suppose they were gone, and desired the officers to hasten after them, lest they should escape.

Q. Why did Rahab, if she had become a good woman, conceal the enemies of her country, and tell a falsehood to prevent their being detected?

A. Various opinions have been formed concerning Rahab's conduct on this trying occasion. Her treachery to her king and country cannot be vindicated on any other ground than the peculiar and trying situation, in which she was placed.—Firmly believing that the God of heaven had devoted the Canaanites to utter destruction, she had but one alternative, either to espouse the cause of Israel and Israel's God, against her country, or perish with it, in a hopeless contest with the Almighty. But as no other people can bring an authenticated commission from God to destroy another nation, Rahab's conduct in countenancing the invaders of her country cannot now be considered as a precedent. With regard to the falsehood she uttered, as it was her absolute duty to protect the spies, and she conceived there would be no other possible way of doing it, her conduct was as excusable as any deception possibly can be. The principle being good was accepted, and the sin which was incidentally mixed with it was pardoned.

Q. What reward did Rahab claim for preserving the spies?

A. When the king's officers had left the city in pursuit of them, and the gates were shut, to prevent any one from coming in or going out, Rahab released the men from their confinement, and informed them that she had heard of all the wonders God had wrought for Israel, and that she firmly believed him to be the only true God, and that the people would be destroyed by the Israelites, and claimed as a reward for her services that her life, and the lives of her kindred should be given her.

Q. What answer did the spies make to her request?

A. They gave her a solemn promise, if she disclosed not their business, to save such of her friends, as should be found within her house, directing her to bind a scarlet line, with which she was about to let them down from the wall, in her window, that all Israel might know which house contained their friends, and not attack it thro' mistake.

Q. How did the spies escape from the city, as the gates were shut?

A. Rahab let them down from her house which stood on the wall, with the scarlet line before mentioned, and by her advice they concealed themselves in the mountains three days, till the officers sent by the king of Jericho had returned from their pursuit. They then crossed the Jordan in safety, and related to Joshua all that had passed; dwelling chiefly on the terror which had seized the Canaanites, which they considered a sure presage of victory.

Q. What preparations did Joshua make on the return of the spies?

A. The morning after their return, Joshua removed his camp to the banks of Jordan; here he waited three days, in order to make preparations for crossing the river. It does not appear that the Israelites expected a miracle to facilitate their passage; yet they appear to have had no distrust of God, or fear as to the event.

The passage of such a number of men, women and children, in the face of an enemy, over a river as large as the Jordan, must have been very difficult and dangerous, for whatever appearance this river may make to modern travellers, history represents it as having been at that time, a large and rapid stream, particularly at the season of its flood, which began before the Israelites attempted to cross it, and as the scripture informs us overflowed all its banks.

Q. Did not the Canaanites attempt to defend the river?

A. They were either so ignorant of the art of war, or they were so intimidated at the approach of the enemy that they never attempted to defend this barrier of their country, or obstruct the passage of Israel.

Q. By what miracle did God honour Joshua, as his chosen commander?

A. By dividing the waters of Jordan for his people to pass over, as he had formerly those of the Red sea before Moses.

Q. How was this performed?

A. The priests were commanded to bear the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as their feet touched the brink of the river, the waters, which came down from above Bethabara, (that is, the house of passage,) rose up, and stood like mountains very far back, towards the sea of Tiberias, without inundating the adjacent country; while those below, ran off towards the Dead or Salt sea, leaving the channel dry for several miles. The priests, at Joshua's

UNIVERSAL

command, marched into the bed of the river, where they remained supporting the sacred symbol of the Divine presence, till all the people had passed over.

Q. What monument did Joshua erect, to perpetrate the memory of this event?

A. He erected a monument, consisting of twelve stones, one for each tribe, in the bed of the river, probably of sufficient height to be generally visible from the banks. Twelve stones were also taken from the spot where the priests were stationed, of which another monument was erected on the Canaanitish shore. The Israelites were commanded, to be particular in instructing their children in all generations, the history of this wonderful event; that they, and all the nations of the earth, might know and fear the Lord.

Q. What feast did the Israelites observe on entering Canaan?

A. The feast of the passover, which had not been observed but once while the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. All those who were born in the desert were circumcised at this place, for it seems that that rite had not been performed while the nation lay under a kind of interdict, on account of their rebellion; but as that generation were cut off, the Lord again renewed his covenant with his people, as the seed of Abraham, by the appointed seal; and the place was called Gilgal, to signify that their idolatrous customs and national guilt were rolled away. Here the people eat of the old corn of the land, and the manna ceased falling.

Q. What further testimony did Joshua receive of God's presence with him?

A. Joshua was either taking a view of the city of Jericho, in order to attack it, or employed in serious meditation, or both alternately; when he was surprised with the appearance of one, in the form of a man, with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua immediately accosted him, and demanded, whether he was a friend or an enemy. The person replied that he was come as captain of the Lord's host: upon which Joshua recognized, and worshipped him, as his Lord, by prostrating himself upon the earth, and humbly asking to know his will. This worship was not only received, but Joshua was commanded to shew the same token of respect to the heavenly vision, which had been required, when the Lord appeared to Moses in the bush: which proves beyond a doubt that this armed man, was no other than Jehovah-Jesus, the second person in the sacred Trinity, anticipating his

incarnation ; and as prince of his Father's host, assuring Joshua of success in war.

Q. Why did not the Canaanites attack the Hebrews while they lay at Gilgal, attending to the ordinances of religion, unprepared for battle ?

A. The miraculous passage of Jordan had so intimidated them, that they shut themselves up in the city of Jericho ; expecting to defend themselves under its walls, till succour should arrive from their allies. Notwithstanding their terror, it does not appear that they proposed any terms of accommodation.

Q. In what manner was the city of Jericho taken ?

A. God commanded Joshua to direct the priests to take up the ark, and carry it in procession round the city, preceded by seven other priests, bearing each a trumpet of ram's horn, (or more properly a trumpet of Jubilee) in his hand, and accompanied by all the men of war ; but they were expressly forbidden to shout, or even to speak, till the day which should be appointed, and the signal given by a long blast of the trumpets. These injunctions were immediately fulfilled, and repeated with the same silence for six days.— We may suppose that the procession was made at such a distance, as to be in no danger from arrows or missile weapons from the walls. Such a singular procession must at first create surprise and consternation, but when day after day passed off, without any effect, the citizens would begin to deride it as a senseless parade, and sink down in security. On the seventh day the Israelites compassed the city seven times, and at the seventh time the priests by command sounded their trumpets and the people raised a general shout ; upon which the walls of Jericho fell to the ground, and the idolatrous inhabitants became an easy prey.

Q. What became of Rahab, whose house stood on the wall ?

A. Probably only that part of the city wall fell, which lay before the army of Israel, and that Rahab's house stood in a different quarter of the town ; for she was saved with all those who had sought a sanctuary beneath her roof ; while the rest of the inhabitants with all their cattle, were slain with the sword. The Israelites reduced the city to ashes, after depositing the vessels of gold, silver, brass and iron, in the sacred treasury : and Joshua pronounced a heavy curse against the man who should presume to rebuild this place which the Lord had devoted to destruction.

Q. Why did God command the utter destruction of Jericho ?

A. The inhabitants had filled up the measure of their iniquity ; and could we read their private history, we should probably see that they were as ripe for destruction, as Sodom and Gomorrah. It pleased the Lord to destroy these enemies, by the sword of Israel, rather than by a pestilence, an earthquake, or a deluge, or fire from heaven. Had an angel been commissioned to destroy them, no one would dare to charge him with iniquity. How then can the Israelites be accused of injustice and cruelty while executing God's express commission, ratified by undeniable miracles? The malignity of sin, and God's anger against sinners, were placed in a stronger light before his people, by their being made the executioners of his vengeance, than if he had destroyed his enemies by his ordinary course of second causes.

Q. What city did Joshua attack after the destruction of Jericho ?

A. He sent a detachment of three thousand men against the king of Ai, a little state about ten miles from Jericho ; but they were unexpectedly repulsed, and compelled to retire, with the loss of thirty-six men. This defeat cast a damp upon the whole army. The people elated at the easy conquest of Jericho, expected the Lord would do all for them, without using the proper means ; and as they had been too confident of their success, they were now, as unreasonably dismayed at a trifling loss.

Q. Was this disposition to pride and indolence, the only reason of their being repulsed ?

A. No—Achan an Israelite, had stolen and secreted, some of the rich spoil of Jericho, which was accursed, and devoted to the fire.

Q. How was Achan's crime brought to light ?

A. Joshua justly considered this check as a divine rebuke, and humbly besought the Lord to reveal the cause of his anger against Israel. The Lord answered him that a sacrilege had been committed, and ordered him to discover the delinquent, that he might be punished. Accordingly lots were cast upon the tribes and families, and Achan of the tribe of Judah was discovered to be the cause of the recent calamity. Joshua addressed him in the tenderest manner, and encouraged him to make a full confession of his transgression, as the only way he could expect mercy for his soul : which he did, acknowledging not only his guilt, but the justice of his punishment.

Q. What was the punishment inflicted on Achan ?

A. Achan with his whole family were stoned to death ; and all their substance, together with the rich spoils which had been purloined from Jericho were burned in the valley of Achor. A monument was raised in memory of the melancholy event.

Q. Why was Achan's whole family punished for his crime ?

A. Magistrates are forbidden by their own authority to punish children for their parent's crimes. But all lives are the Lord's, and forfeited by sin, and he has a right to dispose of them as he pleases : God cannot be unjust, and though his ways are hid from our view, we may be assured he never acts without a reason. Probably Achan's family united with him in coveting the accursed spoils of Jericho, as Sapphira did with Annanias, in lying to the Holy Ghost.

Q. Did Joshua attack Ai the second time ?

A. After the death of Achan, God encouraged Joshua to attack that city, promising to deliver it into his hand. Jericho had been taken without the assistance of human agency, to teach the people to depend on God for success ; but as this miracle increased their pride and self indulgence, the conquest of Ai, though much smaller than Jericho, was not to be obtained but by diligence, self denial, and the exertion of all their powers, both of body and mind. The whole force of Israël was drawn out against it ; an ambush was laid, and all the arts of war employed, before this small place could be subdued. The city was reduced to ashes, but the spoil was given to the Israelites, as the first fruits of Canaan.

Q. What was the next memorable act of Joshua ?

A. By the conquest of Ai, Joshua obtained access to the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, and notwithstanding the unsettled state of Israel, and the machinations of surrounding enemies, he proceeded to renew the covenant between the Lord and his people, as had been commanded by Moses.— He erected an altar, and offered the instituted sacrifices ; after having written an abstract of the law upon the plaistered stones, he caused the blessings and the cursings to be pronounced from the appointed mountains, according to the form prescribed. He also read over the whole law, in the hearing of the people, including not only the women and children, but all the strangers in covenant with Israel.

Q. Did not the catastrophe of Jericho and Ai, induce the people of Canaan to submit to Joshua without resistance ?

A. Most of the kings of Canaan combined against the common enemy. The people of Gibeon formed the only ex-

ception; instead of casting themselves unreservedly on the mercy of Israel, and Israel's God, as Rahab and her friends had done, they chose to elude the impending danger by stratagem.

Q. What stratagem did they employ?

A. The ambassadors of Gibeon entered the camp of Israel, dressed in tattered garments, old shoes, bearing mouldy bread, and old provisions in their sacks, pretending they came from a distant country, to form a league with Israel: having heard of all the wonders God had wrought in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for his people; artfully omitting the passage over Jordan, the reduction of Jericho and Ai, willing to be thought ignorant of these recent events. Joshua was deceived by their artful address, and wretched appearance, and rashly concluded an alliance with them, without asking counsel of the Lord. At the expiration of three days, the artifice was discovered; and the deceitful Gibeonites, though secured from extirpation by the oath of Joshua and the princes of Israel, were sentenced to perpetual servitude.

Q. By what right did Joshua condemn the Gibeonites to servitude after having made a league with them?

A. The oath of the princes extended no farther than protection from death, and as the Gibeonites had acted a deceitful part, they could not expect more favourable terms.—The Lord of the whole earth had given Canaan to the seed of Israel for a possession, and the inhabitants for bond servants; yet it does not appear that the Israelites were forbidden to spare the lives of any who submitted themselves to them: and it is generally supposed that they offered terms of peace to every city before they assaulted it, according to the law given by Moses, Deut. xx. 10, 15. But except the Gibeonites no nation appears to have sought for peace; their hearts were filled with rage, and determined resistance, and being ripe for destruction, they were left to their own obstinacy.

Q. Was the nation of Israel generally pleased with this determination respecting Gibeon?

A. They were not, and murmured against Joshua and the princes, but they remained firm to their engagement. It is evident God approved their conduct, and was displeased with king Saul, when he, long after, injured the Gibeonites.—The Gibeonites though deprived of their cities and lands, and reduced to the lowest state of servitude, as a rebuke for their prevarication, reaped finally a great advantage from their situation; for being made servants in the house of the Lord, they became instead of *accursed from God* (like the other Can-

naanites,) *wholly devoted to him* : and were probably afterwards distinguished by the appellation of *Nethinims*, or *dedicated persons*.

Q. What became of the confederated princes ?

A. They hastened on their forces to make an example of the cowardly Gibeonites, for deserting the common cause. The Gibeonites applied to Joshua for assistance ; who marched immediately to their relief, and compelled the royal confederates to retire with precipitation. As they were flying in the utmost disorder, a miraculous shower of hail stones fell upon them, which slew a greater number than had fallen by the swords of the Hebrews. As it was probable many might escape in the general dispersion, Joshua (doubtless by the impulse of the Holy Spirit,) commanded the sun and the moon to stand still, till the victory should be complete. He who keeps the planets in their orbits, commanded them to obey the voice of his servant, for the day was extended to the length of two.

Q. How can this command be reconciled with our ideas of astronomy ?

A. Had Joshua given his command, or the miracle been recorded, according to the terms of modern astronomy, but few would even now comprehend it ; and as the Israelites were totally ignorant of astronomy, the inspired historians suited their language to the capacity of the people for whom they wrote. The Bible was not intended to teach men human science. Many inquiries have also been made, concerning the manner in which this miracle was wrought, but it is far beyond our comprehension ; we can only say that the fact is authenticated by divine testimony, and that the power which made all worlds can accelerate or retard their motion at pleasure.

Q. What became of the five kings whom Joshua defeated ?

A. After the battle was over they were found hid in a cave ; Joshua took them from their place of concealment, and commanded the princes of Israel to set their feet upon the necks of the captive kings, not by way of insult, but as a token of their condemnation, as hardened enemies of God ; they were then put to death. We know not how guilty they were, but had the Divine Spirit seen fit to disclose the iniquity of their lives, we should clearly see the justice of their punishment.

Q. What was the next memorable event in the conquest of Canaan ?

A. A victory over Jabin king of Hazor, who united all the forces of the country, which the inspired historian compares in point of numbers to the sand on the sea-shore. Joshua attacked their camp by surprise, and threw the whole army into such confusion that they evacuated their tents, and fled with the utmost precipitation. The Israelites pursued, and obtained an easy victory. Their chariots of war, and their horses, fell into the hands of Joshua. The Israelites had now an opportunity of furnishing themselves with cavalry; but as the Lord did not intend them for a nation of warriors, the chariots were ordered to be burned, and the horses to be disabled from any other than domestic service. Hazor the capital city, which had been considered the head of the nations, fell into their hands, which they burned. The rest of the cities belonging to the confederate princes were permitted to stand, but their inhabitants were involved in one general destruction.

Q. Did the Anakims who had been such a terror to the Israelites distinguish themselves in this war?

A. They did not, but were subdued with the other nations, except those who dwelt in the cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

Q. How many years passed in conquering Canaan?

A. About seven, and in the interval of peace which followed, Joshua divided the land by lot among the Israelites, as Moses had directed. Appointed the cities of refuge; set up the tabernacle in Shiloh, a city in the lot of Ephraim, near the centre of Canaan. The tribes of Reuben, and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, which had chosen their inheritance on the other side Jordan, but had kindly assisted their brethren in the reduction of Canaan, Joshua dismissed, after commending their fidelity, and pronouncing a blessing upon them.

Q. What memorial did these tribes erect in token of their relationship to the other tribes?

A. These victorious soldiers who had faithfully served their brethren in the conquest of Canaan, erected no trophy to commemorate their own exploits, but a very large altar, exactly in the form of that at Shiloh, as a witness that they and their posterity had a right to join in all the ordinances of the tabernacle. But as it was an express command of God, that no sacrifices should be offered except at the door of the tabernacle, their brethren mistaking their intention and being zealous for the honor of God, assembled at Shiloh, and in rather a hasty manner demanded Joshua to lead them against their

brethren. Joshua, Eleazer and the elders of Israel, by their authority and wisdom, tempered the zeal of their enraged brethren; and they consented to send an embassy to the suspected tribes, and to try what reproof and persuasion could effect.

Q. What was the success of this measure?

A. The ambassadors, who were the principal men out of each tribe, reproved their brethren sharply for their suspected defection, reminding them of the calamities brought upon the whole nation by the single offence of Achan: and requested them if they considered their land unhallowed because they had no altar, to pass over Jordan and they would divide their inheritance with them. The Reubenites and the other tribes, with the utmost solemnity and meekness, explained their intention, and fully satisfied their brethren that far from wishing to withdraw from the worship at Shiloh, they had erected this altar, not for sacrifice, but as a token to their children that they belonged to Israel; lest in future generations that connexion should be forgotten, and their posterity fall into idolatry.

Q. Did this convince the ambassadors?

A. Yes, and they rejoiced at finding that their brethren were not only innocent of the supposed transgression, but evinced a true spirit of piety in building the altar. This joy was diffused through the whole congregation, when the ambassadors on their return placed the transaction in its true light.

Q. How long did Joshua govern Israel after the conquest of Canaan?

A. About seventeen years; at the expiration of which time, feeling his death approaching, he assembled all the people of Shechem, in order to give them his last admonitions, and to renew the solemn covenant with the God of their fathers. After having reminded them of the great things God had wrought for them, he exhorted them to obey his commands, not only in the outward act, but to take good heed to love the Lord; reminding them that as all the blessings God had promised, were bestowed upon them, so if they forsook his law and broke his covenant, all the curses denounced, would as certainly follow. He then solemnly renewed the covenant, the people promising in the most unequivocal terms to obey it fully. Joshua erected a monument of stone as a witness of the solemn vows they had made; to put away all strange gods, and worship the Lord only. He then

B

blessed the congregation and dismissed them to their several places of abode.

Q. Had the Israelites worshipped idols since the golden calf was destroyed?

A. It seems by Joshua's admonition, that some of them kept idols which they secretly worshipped, and he warned them that if they expected any favor from God they must worship him with a perfect heart.

Q. How long did Joshua live after this solemnity?

A. Only a short time. He died in the hundred and tenth year of his age: 1445 years before Christ, in the year of the world 2559. His remains were buried in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath Serah.

Q. Will you sum up the most striking parts of Joshua's character?

A. Joshua the son of Nun, who has made so distinguished a figure in the history of Israel, is represented as having been trained up from early youth in the service of Moses, and in communion with God. We found him in the mount with his master when he went to receive the written law, while the multitude below were polluting themselves with idols. He entered the tabernacle with Moses at the time it was removed out of the camp, and the glory of the Lord overshadowed it: and there he remained, while his master returned to converse with the people. Early habits of piety and obedience, are the best security against sin, and the surest foundation of honour and usefulness. Joshua was trained up for the camp in the tabernacle and on the mount, and was prepared to be a great statesman, by learning first to be the humble saint and faithful minister. The character of Moses and Joshua beautifully illustrate each other. Moses knew that this young man was to succeed him in office; was to finish the work which he was permitted only to begin; was to have the glory of conquering, and establishing Israel in the Land of Promise. An ordinary mind would have looked with a jealous eye upon the rising sun, which was to eclipse not only his own glory, but cast a shade over his family. But in the great Lawgiver of Israel, every selfish, every domestic consideration gave way to the rising merits of Joshua, and the appointment of Heaven. It was equally natural for a young man like Joshua, who knew he was destined to rule, to reach the summit of human grandeur; it was natural for such an one, to become impatient of authority, to be eager to begin that career of glory for which he was destined. But the son of Nun discovered true magnanimity, in cheerfully

yielding the subjection becoming an inferior, and waiting patiently for the time and manner which Providence should choose of exalting him to honour. Moses treated him as a favorite son rising into eminence ; he behaved to Moses as to a beloved parent crowned with years and honor, and which he hoped to see him long enjoy. After the death of Moses, Joshua had ample room for displaying the consummate warrior, the able statesman, the father of his people, and the servant of God : and in each of these characters he shown an illustrious example to posterity.

Q. What other eminent person died about this time ?

A. Eleazer the high priest, who was buried on a hill belonging to his son and successor, Phineas. About this time, the body of Joseph, which had been brought out of Egypt by the Israelites, was interred, with due solemnity, in a piece of ground which the patriarch Jacob had purchased of the Shechemites, and which was now delivered by lot to the tribe of Joseph.

CHAP. II.

The history of Israel from the death of Joshua to the death of Jephthah.

Q. Who was appointed to succeed Joshua in the government of Israel ?

A. God was the King and Ruler of his people Israel, and under him the several tribes chose their own officers and magistrates. These officers were first appointed by Moses, at the advice of Jethro. Their number was 72 ; they were chosen six from each tribe, men venerable for their age and sanctity. They were to consult together upon extraordinary occasions. The high priest was the chief counsellor, and sometimes a judge ; for the oracle of God was with him.—The common priests and Levites were assistant judges.—But the executive power was vested in the judge of each tribe.—And God himself was their king and the centre of union and government.

Q. What was the condition of Israel after Joshua's death ?

A. During the latter part of Joshua's life, the Canaanites who had secreted themselves and escaped the sword of Israel, began again to gather strength and courage ; while the people of Israel more intent on present enjoyment than su-

ture prosperity, had become indolent and averse from war. But being roused by the reproofs of their dying commander, they consulted the Lord who should go up against the enemy; and the divine oracle appointed the tribe of Judah to take the lead in battle.

Q. Who was appointed commander in chief?

A. Caleb, who, with Joshua, had proved faithful when the Israelites rebelled in the wilderness; and who was the only warrior of all that vast multitude which Moses brought out of Egypt.

Q. Did the tribe of Judah go alone to battle?

A. The tribe of Simeon only assisted them, for tho' several cities strongly fortified remained in the enemies hands, they did not think it necessary to engage all their brethren in the enterprize.

Q. What cities were subdued at this time?

A. Bezek, whose king was styled Adonibezek, which signifies the lord of Bezek. He had been a great warrior, and a cruel tyrant, for he had seventy captive princes whom he had disabled by cutting off their thumbs and great toes; who gathered their food like dogs under his table; thus adding insult to cruelty. The Israelites (probably by divine command,) disabled this cruel tyrant in the same manner, by cutting off his thumbs and toes, and he acknowledged the justice of the punishment.

Q. Was Bezek the only city which was conquered by the tribes of Judah and Simeon?

A. No, they besieged Jerusalem and took the lower city, but the tower of Zion resisted all their attacks; they took also the strong cities of Hebron and Debir, and expelled the posterity of Anak, who were men of uncommon stature and exceedingly fierce countenance, so that their appearance withered the courage of common enemies, but could not resist the valiant tribe of Judah, with Caleb for their leader. The city of Hebron with the suburbs they gave as an extraordinary portion to the Levites, but the land which appertained to the city was given to Caleb, as Moses had promised when he returned from spying out the country.

Q. By whom was the city of Debir taken?

A. That city was originally called Kirjath-sepher. Caleb promised to give his daughter Achsah, to the brave man who should take it. Othniel the son of Caleb's youngest brother, undertook the dangerous enterprize, and received the due reward of his valour.

Q. Was any portion allotted to the descendants of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law?

A. Hobab the son of Jethro, with his descendants, on their first entering into Canaan, pitched their tents near Jericho, which lay in the lot of Benjamin: but afterwards they joined themselves to Judah, and settled in the borders of the wilderness, where they seemed to have lived a retired and peaceable life, little interfering in public affairs.

Q. What other cities were taken in this war?

A. Several which lay in the mountainous part of Canaan; with Gaza, Askefon, and Ekron, which were situated near the sea. Notwithstanding this success, the children of Judah did not possess themselves of all the cities in the valley, for the inhabitants had chariots of iron, and the people feared to attack them, and thus by their unbelief they provoked God to withdraw his special favor and protection.

Q. Were the other tribes as negligent of their advantages as Judah?

A. They were more negligent than Judah; for while Caleb, Othniel, and their valiant adherents were exerting themselves for the benefit of their country, the other tribes disobeyed the divine command, of utterly destroying God's enemies; and contented themselves with rendering them tributary.

Q. Did not this conduct bring a reproof upon Israel?

A. Yes, the angel of the covenant, the great I AM, who appeared to Moses in the bush, and to Joshua near Jericho, appeared to the people first at Gilgal, and afterward at Shiloh, where they were assembled to worship, and reproved them for not obeying his commands, reminding them of the covenant which he had made with their fathers: that on condition that they made no league with the inhabitants of the land, but broke down their altars, destroyed their idols, and the idolatrous inhabitants, he would never forsake them.—But as they had not obeyed his voice, the surviving inhabitants should remain as a snare and a scourge unto Israel.

Q. What effect did this heavenly vision produce upon the people?

A. They shewed signs of deep humiliation; and the place was called Bochim, from the bitter weeping of the Israelites. Their subsequent history shews their sorrow to have been temporary. The Lord, who foresaw the future conduct of Israel, had left several nations to prove and try his people, which

would otherwise have been delivered into the hands of Joshua.

Q. How long did God's chosen people continue to serve him ?

A. Till the whole of that generation was dead, which had been educated by Moses in the desert, and had been witnesses of the wonderful works of God. The next generation were so imprudent as to intermarry with the families of the Canaanites, which were left in the land. These connexions drew them from the worship of the true God, and introduced much wickedness into the country.

Q. Why did not the High Priest, and the other officers of government, prevent such express violation of the law ?

A. As the people had forsaken God, so God gave them up to all the misery attendant on anarchy.* Their officers of justice, (if they had any,) neglected their duty. And by their disunion and want of government, they became an easy prey to their enemies. Nor was this the only affliction occasioned by the want of wise and just rulers. The citizens became indolent and vicious.

Q. What particular sins arose in consequence of their departure from the laws and ordinances of God ?

A. During this period of confusion and anarchy, a wealthy man of mount Ephraim, named Micah, stole eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother. This woman in the bitterness of heart, openly imprecated the divine vengeance on the thief, if he did not restore her treasure, declaring it was devoted to God, by a solemn vow, for the benefit of her son. This heavy curse of his mother's affrighted Micah; he acknowledged the theft, and restored the money; and by that means procured his mother's blessing, and two hundred shekels of silver to make a molten and a graven image; which were placed in Micah's house. He consecrated his son to be a priest; but afterwards this office was transferred to an indigent young Levite, who appears to have been a man of bad character, and a roving disposition; otherwise, though the times were bad, he would not have been so poor.

Q. Did Micah intend to leave the worship of God entirely?

A. It does not appear that he did; but through ignorance he imagined that he should gain the favour of Heaven, by

**Josephus affirms that they were so intent upon increasing their wealth that they neglected to choose their ordinary magistrates, and lived entirely without government.*

setting up a house of idol gods, and keeping a Levite as his priest. Thus was idolatry first established in Israel, by means of Micah and his mother.

Q. Did not the judges punish this defection ?

A. Probably there was no judge at that time, or if there were he did not possess sufficient authority, for every enormity was prefaced with, "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Q. What became of Micah's images ?

A. About this time the tribe of Dan being straitened for room, not having conquered the whole of their inheritance, sent men to examine the city of Laish, intending to take possession of it. These spies passed the house of Micah, and seeing the Levite whom they knew, and learning from him, that he had become a priest, desired him to ask counsel of God respecting the success of their expedition. The Levite, who probably went through the form of consultation, answered according to their inclinations, which being verified by the event, raised the reputation of the oracle, and sanctioned the idolatry. These spies, encouraged by the Levite, went immediately to Laish, a town of considerable importance which lay in the north part of Canaan, but within the boundaries of the promised land. The people of Laish inhabited a fertile country; and having remained so long unmolested, they despised the Hebrews, and lived in the most supine carelessness, without either magistrate, soldiery or other means of defence. The spies having taken a survey of the place, hastened back to their employers and gave an accurate account of its wealth and defenceless situation. The Danites immediately prepared to possess themselves of Laish; but hearing of Micah's images, they stopped at his house and forcibly deprived him of them, persuaded the Levite to accompany them, and become a priest to their new settlement.

Q. How did Micah support the loss of his gods ?

A. Micah, though ignorant and immoral, yet valued his gods as his chief treasure; for he believed his religion would be accepted, and that on account of it, "the Lord could do him good." He therefore pursued after the Danites, with as many men as he could collect together; and reproached them with having robbed him of all he valued on earth; but the only answer he received was, that his outcries might probably cost him his life, and therefore it would be advisable for him to return home peaceably. Micah finding that persuasion had no effect, and that his followers were not sufficient to enforce justice, was obliged to submit to his grievous loss.

Q. Were the Danites successful in their enterprize ?

A. They were ; and this enterprize shews the supineness of the Israelites, who had so long neglected to conquer the country God had given them ; for it was conducted by only six hundred men, encumbered with their families ; yet they destroyed the city of Laish, and built one which they called Dan, upon its ruins. In this city they placed the idols they had stolen, and the Levite, whose name was Jonathan, became their priest. As Dan lay on the northern extremity of Canaan, none of the judges had sufficient power to destroy their idolatry, which continued the whole time the house of God was at Shiloh.

Q. What other enormities do we read of, while there was no ruler in Israel ?

A. The history of one family is sometimes the history of a whole nation. Where vice pervades private families it is melancholy ; when the government is corrupt it is more distressing ; but when the priesthood degenerates into hirelings for idols, it is the abyss of wretchedness, and the prelude to swift destruction ; for when both the people and priest have forsaken the true worship of God, they cannot determine where the downward course will end. We accordingly find under nearly the same date the laws of marriage broken ; the most flagrant breach of hospitality committed, with murder ! murder attended by circumstances which chill the blood with horror. These atrocious acts were not committed by one person in the height of passion, or resentment, but by numbers ; and these violators of the peace of society and the laws of humanity and religion, protected not only by their own city, but by a powerful tribe.

Q. Which tribe had become so degenerate as to countenance such acts of cruelty and baseness ?

A. The tribe of Benjamin (which was justly compared to a wolf by the dying patriarch.) The other tribes united to revenge the wrongs of the injured husband, who was a Levite, and whose wife had been most inhumanly murdered.

Q. What method did the Levite take to acquaint the several tribes of the shocking murder of his wife ?

A. He cut her dead body in pieces, and sent a piece to each tribe.

Q. Was it not a very inhuman action, thus to mangle the corpse of that unhappy woman ?

A. It had that appearance, but was intended to excite a more general attention, and a keener resentment against so

horrible a crime, which called for as tremendous a punishment.

Q. Did it produce the desired effect ?

A. Yes, it roused the whole congregation of Israel as one man. They were gathered at Mizpeh, about 400,000 men of war, with the leaders of each tribe, except that of Benjamin, which being summoned, not only refused to appear in the assembly, but was offended at the interference of their brethren.

Q. What took place at the assembly of Mizpeh ?

A. After hearing the Levite relate his melancholy story, the Israelites took a solemn vow not to return to their own houses till they had punished the enormous wickedness committed at Gibeah. They sent messengers to demand the men who had been guilty of such abominable crimes, that they might put them to death. The Benjamites not only refused to deliver up the criminals to justice, but took arms in their defence.

Q. What was the success of the first battle ?

A. The Israelites were defeated before the walls of Gibeah, and lost 2200 men.

Q. Why did God permit the Israelites to be defeated in so good a cause ?

A. Their eagerness to punish abomination in Israel was proper. But they should first have consulted God upon the occasion. They were forbidden to levy war upon their brethren for any crime but idolatry; yet they suffered an idol to be established in the city of Dan. This offence, tho' less destructive of the peace of society, than the abomination committed at Gibeah, struck directly at the heart of religion, and honour of God. The Israelites ought to have begun with personal and national repentance and reformation, with solemn sacrifices and earnest supplications for divine assistance. This was required in other wars; how much more in such a war as this? Not attending to these previous duties; going forth to battle under the guilt of their own sins; confiding in their numbers and the goodness of their cause; they met at first with severe rebukes.

Q. What effect did the loss of so many men have on the minds of the Israelites ?

A. They were greatly afflicted, and began to perceive they had acted wrong in not consulting God, whether they should make war upon their brethren. They now therefore enquired, whether they should go again to battle against Gibeah, and received a command to go. But as they were not

sufficiently humbled, they were again defeated and lost 1800 men. The number slain in these two encounters amounted to many more than all the army of Benjamin.

Q. Were not the Israelites discouraged at this second defeat?

A. No, it humbled and brought them to a proper dependence on God. The Benjamites elated with their success, swollen with insolence and pride, were ripe for destruction. Accordingly the next day they were defeated; the city of Gibeah burnt to the ground; the whole tribe of Benjamin, women and children, slain, except 600 men who fled to the rock of Rimmon (which appears to have been a strong fortress in the wilderness); where they concealed themselves four months. All the cities which lay in the way of the enraged conquerors were burnt.

Q. Were not the Israelites greatly to blame in destroying the innocent women and children?

A. They were, and when their anger began to subside, they bewailed the consequences of their victory, and appear to have kept a day of fasting and prayer upon the occasion. The Lord had commanded that children should not be put to death for the parent's crimes; except among the devoted Canaanites who were wholly given up to idolatry, men, women and children. But the case of Benjamin was very different; and the Israelites bitterly lamented, that indiscriminate slaughter which had blotted out the name of one of the chosen tribes.

Q. What method did they take to restore the tribe of Benjamin?

A. They sent to invite them to return peaceably to their habitations. The resentment of the conquerors was appeased; but they knew not how to furnish their surviving brethren with wives; as in the heat of their indignation against the tribe of Benjamin, for defending the brutal inhabitants of Gibeah, they had bound themselves by a heavy curse, that none of them should give his daughter for a wife to any Benjamite. After some consideration they adopted the following expedient; they enquired who among all the tribes of Israel came not up to Mizpeh, when summoned to revenge the Levite's wrongs, and found that the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, a city which lay at a great distance beyond Jordan, had not been present at the assembly, or assistant in the war. And as they had taken a solemn oath to punish such delinquents with death, they sent a detachment to Jabesh-Gilead with orders to destroy all the inhabitants of the city except the unmarried women of good character, which they save

to the Benjamites for wives. But as those were not sufficient, the Elders of Israel permitted the remainder to take themselves wives from among the young women who performed sacred dances at a feast held at Shiloh.

Q. Were these practices allowed of by the virtuous part of the community?

A. Undoubtedly they were not observed, and we are not to look for right actions in the Israelites at this stage of their history. Phineas the high priest was yet living, and by his age, and the sanctity of his character, deserved to be held in high estimation; yet we do not hear of his being consulted upon this occasion; and in the late civil war his counsel was only asked officially, when they proposed questions for him, to enquire of the Lord by Urim and Thummim. If the men of Jabesh-Gilead received the summons, and refused to obey the call of their country, they were proper subjects of chastisement, but this did not warrant their brethren to devote them to utter destruction. The Israelites appear to have taken upon them the high prerogative of military executions, which belongs only to God. The permission given to the Benjamites at Shiloh, was not only an evasion of the vow made so solemnly; but it licensed fraud, violence, and the marriage of children without the consent of their parents: and shews that what rulers they had in Israel were weak, as well as corrupt men, and that the nation was in every respect rushing to destruction.

Q. How long after this period did they continue a free people?

A. But a few years; to their other vices they added the sin of idolatry. The example of the Danites appears to have been generally followed. To chastise them for their apostacy, God raised up a distant enemy. This prince whose name was Chusan-Rishathaim, and who reigned beyond the river Euphrates at Mesopotamia, kept them in subjection eight years. The people who had forgotten God in prosperity, remembered in their distress his wonderful works and began to supplicate his mercy.

Q. Did God listen to their supplications?

A. Being rich in mercy he was pleased to send them a deliverer; Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who freed them from the yoke of Chushan after they had served him eight years. There appears to have been a great reformation in religion and manners during Othniel's administration; and the Hebrews were blessed with forty years of prosperity and peace.

Q. Did the Israelites relapse into idolatry after they had witnessed the misery it occasioned ?

A. After the death of Othniel they again forsook the worship of the true God, and became more vile than before ; which of course produced a more heavy chastisement.

Q. Who was their next oppressor ?

A. Eglon king of Moab ; [B. C. 1325 ; A. M. 2679 ;] to whom the Lord granted power and prosperity, that he might be his instrument in punishing an ungrateful and rebellious nation.

Q. How long did Eglon oppress the Israelites ?

A. He ruled over them eighteen years. At length their stubborn tempers were subdued by adversity ; and they cried unto the Lord, who sent them relief by the hand of Ehud a Benjamite.

Q. How long did Ehud procure their emancipation from servitude ?

A. He was sent with a present to the king of Moab, and pretending to have a secret message to deliver, he took that opportunity of freeing his unhappy country from bondage, by murdering the tyrant.

Q. Was this conduct approved of ?

A. Ehud's conduct cannot be made a precedent, or authorize the assassination of kings, let them be ever so tyrannical, unless a man were called to act by the evident command of God, as Ehud probably was.

Q. Did the murder of Eglon, free Israel from the bondage of Moab ?

A. Ehud gathered a valiant army from mount Ephraim, and took possession of the fords of Jordan, before the Moabites discovered their king was dead. Being, by this well-timed precaution, cut off from all intercourse with their countrymen, the Moabites were easily destroyed ; and the Israelites had rest from war eighty years, counting from the death of Othniel.

Q. Who was the next deliverer of his country ?

A. Shamgar, who was probably employed in agriculture, when the Philistines invaded the land, and being animated and strengthened by the spirit of God, slew six hundred of the enemy with an ox-goad. Shamgar was also a judge, but how long his jurisdiction lasted we are not informed.

Q. Did not these repeated mercies and judgments secure

the fickle Israelites from rebelling against their God and King?

A. While they trembled at his judgments, they sought him early, but no sooner was the rod removed, than they forgot their God, and turned again to their idols. Israel had enjoyed a blessed repose of fourscore years, and were again corrupted by ease and prosperity. If we are to judge of the atrocity of their national guilt at this time, from the severity of the punishment, the length of its duration, and the violence of their oppressor, we must conclude it to have been uncommonly grievous: for the Lord subjected them to Jabin king of Canaan; part of whose formidable host consisted of 900 chariots of iron; and for twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

Q. How could Jabin be king of Canaan when the Israelites had conquered the country?

A. Jabin king of Hazor reigned in the north part of Canaan: he formed one of the great confederacy against Joshua, by whom he was slain and his city burnt. But it seems that the Canaanites rebuilt the city, and another Jabin, probably a descendant of the former, reigned there with great power. The remainder of the Canaanites resorted to his army, which was commanded by an able officer called Sisera, in whom Jabin placed great confidence. The place Sisera chose for his residence was called Herosheth of the Gentiles, "or nations," to signify that the strength of the nations was gathered to that place. And such was the power of this formidable army, that hope seemed quite extinguished in Israel. In the course of twenty years oppression, not one man appeared awakened to such a sense of his country's wrongs, as to inspire him with sufficient spirit to hazard his life in removing or avenging them.

Q. To whom did the Israelites go for counsel in this dark period?

A. The sacred flame of public spirit, smothered in each manly breast, glowed in a female bosom; and the tribunal of judgment, deserted by masculine virtue and ability, was honorably filled by feminine discernment, patriotism and zeal. The cause of the church of God is never to be despaired of. Its emblem is "the bush burning but not consumed." Its motto "cast down but not destroyed."

Q. Who was this woman that judged Israel at this calamitous period?

A. Deborah a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth. Hitherto we have only seen holy men of God, speaking by the inspira-

tion of the Holy Ghost. But the great Jehovah is no respecter of persons or sexes. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he sheweth unto them his holy covenant." Deborah assumed no pageantry of state; she chose her simple dwelling beneath the shade of a palm tree; and such was the purity and sacredness of her character, the affability of her manners, the impartiality of her conduct, the importance of her public services, the eminence and extensive utility of her talents and her virtues, that all Israel sought unto her for judgment. Her rule was the Law and Testimony of the living God. Inspired with the spirit of the Almighty, she made his glory and the good of her country the sole motive of acting in a public capacity, and received as her reward the testimony of a good conscience, and the respect of a grateful nation.

Q. Did Deborah make any exertions to free her country from the yoke of bondage?

A. When she found the people beginning to wake from the lethargic state into which sin and the galling yoke of foreign despotism had sunk them, she engaged in the noble and generous enterprize of emancipating her bleeding country from their inglorious chains. But though Deborah acted as sole judge in time of peace, she did not choose to assume the command in a military expedition, but with the approbation of Heaven, called upon Barak the son of Abinoam to command the army.

Q. Did Barak accept the commission?

A. Such was the general despondency which prevailed at that period, or such the confidence reposed in Deborah, that Barak refused to lead the forces of his country, except Deborah consented to be his companion and directress in the field of battle. To this proposal Deborah assented, and cheerfully prepared to accompany the captain of the Lord's host to "the valley of Decision."

Q. Was it consistent with feminine delicacy and propriety for Deborah to become a leader in arms?

A. Courage has been considered an attribute peculiar to men, but there are situations in which that manly virtue may be adopted into the female character, not only without giving offence, but so as to win the highest approbation. Deborah would not have become a leader in arms, could she have avoided it with propriety. But when her country demanded her services, she hesitated not through weakness or fear to animate the timid warriors of Israel by her courage, and aid them by her counsel. Deborah by the spirit of prophecy informed Barak that the glory he should obtain

over the vanquished enemy, would suffer considerable diminution, not only by her participating of it, but that Providence had decreed that Sisera should not meet with an honorable death in the field of battle, but should fall ignominiously by the hand of a woman. [B. C. 1285.]

Q. What number of forces had Barak and Deborah, to encounter the powerful host of Sisera?

A. Only ten thousand men, drawn chiefly from two of the smaller tribes, Zebulon and Naphtali; and these forces illy armed, as we learn from Deborah's song of praise: "was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand?" It is probable that but few of Barak's soldiers were provided with shields and spears, but armed with bows, slings, ox-goads, and other instruments of husbandry. After the battle began they armed themselves by seizing those of their fallen enemies.

Q. What circumstances of the battle can you relate?

A. Barak feeling the inferiority of his forces, took possession of mount Tabor, meaning to act only on the defensive, till Providence should point out an opportunity of attacking the enemy to advantage. The impetuosity of Sisera soon presented such an opportunity. Enraged that an enemy which he thought broken by calamity and long oppression, should take arms against their lordly masters, Sisera collected the whole of his vast strength, determined to crush the puny insurrection at one blow. Such was the expectation of Jabin's captain; but the great Jehovah had determined otherwise. And the inspired prophetess assured Barak that the day was come, when God would deliver Sisera and his army into the hand of Israel. Barak, thus encouraged, ventured down into the plain, where the iron chariots had the greatest advantage; and thus the victory became the more illustrious. Aided by Israel's God "one chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight."

Q. Was there any miraculous interposition in favour of the Israelites?

A. Deborah when celebrating her victory, expresses as much: "They fought from Heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." Some suppose that by the stars, the angels of God are designated. Josephus affirms, that an extraordinary shower of rain and hail blinded the eyes of the Canaanites, and drove back their darts upon their own heads. The river Kishon swelled probably by the recent tempest, swept away the fugitives who endeavored to escape over its waters for safety. The expedition was undoubtedly conducted by the special agency of God. But the narration on the

sancted page is too general and concise, for us to pronounce, where human valour ended and where the interposition of Heaven began. The victory however was complete; the commander in chief, who a short time before had nine hundred chariots of iron at his disposal, was constrained to consult his safety by flight.

Q. Where did Sisera flee for concealment?

A. Seeing his army destroyed, and himself in danger of falling into the hands of triumphant Israel, he alighted from his chariot and fled on foot to the house of Heber the Kenite, a descendant from Hobab, the son of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. The other Kenites dwelt on the borders of the wilderness pertaining to Judah; but Heber had removed with his family to the northern part of the country, where he dwelt in tents, and found convenient pasturage for his flocks. Heber found means of preserving peace between his family and Jabin's. In confidence of this, Sisera sought protection from Jael the wife of Heber, who it seems inhabited a separate tent from her husband.

Q. And did he find that protection which he sought?

A. Jael, the wife of Heber, received Sisera with every mark of humanity and respect, due to a great man and a friend in distress. She gave him milk to assuage his thirst; she covered him with her own hands, that he might gain repose after the fatigues of the day. When through weariness and fatigue he had sunk into a profound sleep, Jael availed herself of his defenceless situation; seizing a hammer and one of the nails or pins used in stretching out the tent, she transfixed the unhappy sleeper as he lay, and with redoubled blows fastened his bleeding temples to the ground. Such was the inglorious end of a man, on whom that morning's sun had risen with a smiling aspect, who but a few hours before was in possession of all that sovereign power could bestow, or flattering hopes could promise.

Q. What reflections can you make on the conduct of Jael?

A. Jael's conduct taken simply in itself, is a horrid complication of all that is base and detestable in human nature. But as her conduct is celebrated in the song of Deborah, we have reason to believe that there were circumstances, which compelled her to commit the murder, which if the Spirit of God had not seen fit to reveal, would have lessened the guilt and perhaps entirely removed the odium of treachery and murder. God has but to disclose a few particulars which are hid from our eyes, and then, what now appears inexplicable, would become clear to the meanest capacity. It is a

mark of respect to superior wisdom and virtue, not always to require an explanation, but to repose implicit trust in known goodness and integrity. And shall we withhold from our Maker that decent respect, which we so cheerfully pay to a fallible, imperfect fellow-creature? Shall we refuse to believe the word of the God of truth; shall we think it too much if in some cases he exacts belief, without vouchsafing to assign a reason? Every instrument God employs must necessarily partake of imperfections; but it follows not that he is pleased with imperfection.

Q. But are there no circumstances revealed which palliate the guilt of Jael?

A. The most satisfactory apology is mentioned in the song of Deborah, where the mother of Sisera looked out of the window and chid his delaying chariot. "Her wise ladies answered, yea she returned answer to herself, have they not sped, have they not divided the spoil to every man a damsel or two? to Sisera a prey of divers colours of needle work," &c. When we see the matrons of Canaan anticipating the fruits of victory, prematurely enjoying the triumph of the subjection of the Israelitish damsels to their own pride, and the brutal pleasure of their warriors, we feel that both Jael and Deborah, were animated with an holy indignation against the violators of their sex's honour and virtue, which induced the one to hazard her life in destroying the inhuman tyrant, and the other to bless that hand which had cut off the enemy of God and her country. Our pity for the fallen warrior and his untimely fate, must of course abate, when we consider that a righteous Providence, by whatever means, stopped his career, which threatened the life, the virtue, the happiness of thousands. It shews us also the extent of that misery to which Israel was subjected, when common humanity was banished from the hearts of their haughty oppressors; and even the women gloried in those crimes of which humanity shudders to think. This too of course diminishes our concern for the cruel disappointment of Sisera's mother, who still with vain expectation looked for that chariot which the ancient river Kishon had swept down its stream.

Q. You have made frequent mention of the song of Deborah, will you give me a more full account of it?

A. After the signal victory gained by Deborah and Barak over the enemies of their God and country, before she gave herself time to repose, Deborah composed an hymn of praise to celebrate that glorious day, which the arm of Omni-

potence had distinguished by wonders of mercy. The tongue of Deborah like the pen of a ready writer dictated the solemn anthem, in which she was joined by Barak and the whole army. To some it is given to perform actions worthy of being recorded, to others the gift of recording those actions in writings worthy of being read. On a favoured few, has been conferred the combined glory of acting nobly, and writing well. On the list of these illustrious few, stands with distinguished honour the name of Deborah. Her poem which must be read with admiration, so long as good taste and the love of virtue inhabit the earth, is the most ancient that exists, except those written by Moses. It was written four hundred and ten years before those of Homer, the great father of heathen poesy.

Q. Will you point out some of the most striking beauties of this ancient poem?

A. The voluntary actions of the people, in offering themselves to fight their own battles, are with singular beauty ascribed to the wisdom and goodness of God, who has the hearts of all in his hand. He who can save by miracles, chooses to save by means. Having proposed her subject she called on the princes of the earth to listen, while she described the greatness of Jehovah, before whom the earth trembled, and the mountains melted. She next called the attention of her people to the unhappy situation from which they had been rescued, in which she draws a moving picture of the wretched state of her country. (See Judges v. 6.)—The highways were unoccupied; a traveller walked through by-ways. “The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel.”

Q. What historical information do these figures convey?

A. From the days of Shamgar, who is supposed to have lived at the close of the 80 years prosperity, to the days of Jael, the land was so infested with enemies, that none could travel in safety on the highways; all intercourse between distant cities was interrupted, except what was carried on by stealth, through secret paths. The villages also were deserted, and the fields left uncultivated; whilst the inhabitants sought a refuge in the fenced cities, where they were in danger of perishing by famine, until Deborah arose a mother and prophetess in Israel.

Q. What was the meaning of Deborah, when she says, “Speak ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgments, and walk by the ways”?

A. She addressed the civil judges and governors of the

land. It seems that riding upon white asses was a distinction appropriated to magistrates, which was not on account of their poverty, but of their simplicity : they had not yet learned to imitate their heathen neighbours, in multiplying horses and chariots. Deborah calls on them to rejoice with her, that they could now travel in safety and administer justice ; for the highways were no longer occupied by a lawless banditti. The lives and property of Israel were no longer at the disposal of a foreign despot, but they might now place their throne of judgment in the gates, for there was none left to put them in fear.

Q. Whom did Deborah next address ?

A. The shepherds of the lately oppressed country. The people could not go out of the gates of the cities to draw water without being exposed to the arrows of the enemy. The shepherds are represented as trembling at the sound of their own feet among the pebbles of the brook, lest they should be heard by their rapacious foes. The prophetess of Israel calls upon them to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, to the inhabitants of the villages, every time they drew water in safety. The divinely inspired poetess having called on magistrates and people to swell the choir of praise, next addresses her own soul to shake off its drowsiness and unite in the general chorus. Then, turning to her companion in victory, she excites him to excel in praise, as he had excelled in courage and counsel.

Q. Did not Deborah point out the situation of the several tribes in her poem ?

A. The tribe most distinguished in Deborah's poem was that of Ephraim. To the exertions of this branch of Joseph's family, in conjunction with those of Zebulun and Naphtali, the victory over the Canaanites was chiefly obtained. A severe censure is expressed of the two tribes and an half, beyond the river. They are represented as totally lost to public spirit. Jordan being a defence to them from the Canaanites, they turned a deaf ear to the cries of their distressed brethren, satisfied that *their* flocks could feed in safety. The same spirit of selfishness is represented as pervading the tribes who inhabited the sea coast, Dan and Asher ; who subsisted by commerce, and, absorbed by the love of gain, heeded not the misery of their country. The tribe of Reuben kept at a distance as disaffected to the common cause, which occasioned much uneasiness and resentment in the minds of their brethren. It is remarkable that the tribes of Judah and Simeon, are not mentioned as deserving censure or commendation ; and this cannot be well accounted

for, unless the inhabitants of the south part of Canaan were so circumstanced, that it could not be expected that they should help their brethren of the north.

Q. Why was a heavy curse pronounced on the city of Meroz?

A. It is probable that the city of Meroz lay near the field of battle, and the inhabitants were more inexcusable in not affording their assistance, than those which lay more remote: perhaps their refusal arose from a secret favor borne the Canaanites. The Lord needed not their assistance even against the mightiest of his enemies, but their conduct proved their unbelief and degeneracy. Deborah did not curse them from personal resentment; but the angel of the Lord commanded her to curse them. Meroz was at that time a flourishing city, but, in consequence of the curse denounced upon it, became so obscure that its situation is at present unknown.

Q. Is any thing more recorded of Deborah after this celebration of victory?

A. A note is subjoined to her history, which shews that her government was founded on the principles of sound reason and religious observance of God's law; "for the land had rest forty years."

Q. What nation inflicted the next chastisement upon Israel?

A. The Midianites were the instrument by which God punished them, for again forsaking his laws, after the death of Deborah.

Q. Was their punishment of long continuance?

A. It lasted only seven years, but appears to have been very heavy; for the Israelites made dens in the mountains, and strong holds, to secure themselves from their enemies, who came rather in the form of freebooters, than as a regular disciplined army.

Q. Were these Midianites of the same nation which Moses nearly extirpated in the wilderness?

A. They were. The remnant which had escaped the sword of Moses, had now increased to a powerful force, and had formed an alliance with the Amalekites, to retaliate upon Israel all their sufferings in former wars. The united forces of Amalek and Midian overrun the country from their own borders, which lay on the north, to Gaza, which was near the Mediterranean sea on the west; so that they desolated the whole land, and the Israelites had nothing remaining of the fruits of the earth, or flocks, or herds. Be-

ing greatly distressed they cried unto the Lord for deliverance.

Q. Did God send them a deliverer upon their request ?

A. He first commissioned a prophet to reprove them for their repeated rebellions, and remind them of the numerous blessings bestowed on their nation. This prophet, it is probable, went from city to city, and delivered his message in the most solemn manner, calling the people to repentance. His preaching appears to have had great effect, and prepared the way for the deliverance of Israel.

Q. By whom did God deliver his people ?

A. By the hand of Gideon, the son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh. [B. C 1245 : A. M. 2759.] The Lord appeared to him in the form of an angel. Gideon was at that time beating out wheat with a staff, in a wine press, that he might conceal it from the Midianites ; for such was the distress of the people, that every method was employed, to conceal a scanty portion of their harvest to keep their families from perishing by hunger.

Q. In what manner did the angel of the covenant address Gideon ?

A. He saluted him as the deliverer of his people ; but Gideon, not knowing it to be the Lord, feeling the distress of his country, and having a humble opinion of his own merits, doubted his assertion, and seemed to think the Lord had utterly cast off his people. The angel again assured him that the Lord would deliver Israel by his hand. Gideon, perceiving it was the angel of the Lord, felt his faith and courage revive, but that he might ascertain the identity of the august personage who addressed him, he entreated the angel to remain till he prepared an offering, to which the angel consented.

Q. What kind of offering did Gideon prepare ?

A. A kid, with unleavened cakes, which might serve either for an hospitable repast, or a sacred oblation. When the offering was presented, the angel commanded Gideon to place it upon a rock, after the manner of sacrifices. When Gideon had done as he was commanded, the angel put forth his staff which he held, and touched the flesh and the offering, which was instantly consumed by supernatural fire. The angel immediately disappeared ; and by this Gideon was perfectly assured that it was God, and not man, who had spoken to him.

Q. What effect did this assurance have on Gideon's mind ?

A. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his own unworthiness, and fell on his face expecting immediate death, because he had seen and conversed with God; for it was a current opinion among the Israelites, that the vision of the Divine glory was fatal, and undoubtedly it is, except as seen in Christ. The sight of a created angel would not have thus terrified Gideon.

Q. How were Gideon's fears removed?

A. The Lord graciously condescended to assure him that he should not die; and Gideon erected an altar in commemoration of the divine goodness, which he called Jehovah-shalom.

Q. What were the first steps Gideon took in delivering his country?

A. He destroyed the altars of Baal. Fearing the citizens of Ophrah would oppose this meritorious work, if he attempted it by day, he performed it by night, with the assistance of only ten men of his father's household. Gideon and his ten faithful associates not only threw down the altar, but cut down the grove which surrounded it, and erected an altar for sacrifice to the Lord upon the same place where Baal's altar had stood.

Q. Was not this contrary to God's command?

A. Sacrificing was generally restricted to the altar at Shiloh, but God at this time commanded a sacrifice at Ophrah, as a protest against the worship of Baal. And, though Gideon was not a priest nor even a Levite, yet, acting by extraordinary commission as a prophet, he erected the altar, and offered a bullock upon it to the Lord; which seems to have been prepared for the idol.

Q. Were the citizens of Ophrah displeased with Gideon's conduct?

A. They were, and assembled the next morning at the house of Joash, Gideon's father, and demanded that the offender should expiate his crime by death. Joash, though he had himself been guilty of idolatry, refused to deliver up his son, and convinced his accusers of the folly of worshipping an idol, which could not defend its own cause.

Q. What name did Joash give his son upon this occasion?

A. That of Jerubbaal, which signifies, "let Baal plead against him, if he is able." Some fragments of Phenician history evidently mention Gideon under the name of Jerombalox, and call him the priest of Jevo, probably from the sacrifices he instituted to Jehovah. The same writer mentions

having received some books from him, which appear to have been the books of Moses.

Q. What method did Gideon pursue to repress the invasions of the enemy ?

A. The Midianites and Amalekites, having crossed Jordan on their annual plundering excursion, Gideon blew the trumpet of war, and all the men of Ophrah and Abiezer joined his standard. There seems to have been a very great reformation in Gideon's native city, and its vicinity, as they were the first to arm in defence of their country. Gideon sent messengers to the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulon and Naphtali, which immediately obeyed its summons. Notwithstanding this re-inforcement, Gideon was still diffident of success : to encourage his own heart, and the hearts of his soldiers, he entreated the Lord to give him a sign, as a sure testimony of his presence and success in the approaching warfare.

Q. What was the token Gideon requested ?

A. That a fleece of wool, which he would put in the floor, might be wet with dew, while the ground should be dry.—The Lord granted this request, but as it is the nature of wool to imbibe moisture from the air, Gideon was not entirely satisfied ; yet conscious of his unbelief, he asked for a reversal of the sign, with an humble petition that God would not be angry. The Lord again granted the request of his doubting servant ; for the next morning the fleece was dry and the surrounding earth moistened with dew.

Q. Were Gideon's doubts removed by this miracle ?

A. They appear to have been dispelled for the time, for early the next morning he marched with his little band to meet the numerous host of the Midianites. To convince the Israelites of their folly in ever trusting to an arm of flesh, God commanded Gideon to disband all those who were faint hearted. The sight of the numerous sons of Midian had filled many bosoms with terror, so that 2,200 relinquished their country's cause.

Q. Did not the loss of so many men dishearten the remainder ?

A. It does not appear to have had that effect, on the contrary some remained, who seemed to have had too great confidence in their own strength and valour ; for the Lord who knew the hearts of his people, prone to exult in their own might, commanded Gideon to lead the remainder to the river's side, where those who knelt down to drink should

be rejected, and those who lapped the water from their hands should be received for the intended expedition. The trial was made, and only three hundred remained with Gideon, by whom God promised to deliver Israel. Probably this small number were all true believers.

Q. What further encouragement did Gideon receive ?

A. He was directed to go into the enemies camp, where he heard a soldier relating a dream to his companion. A cake of barley he saw in his nightly vision fall against a tent of Midian and overthrow it. This dream the soldier's friend interpreted to represent the small army of Gideon, which was destined to overthrow the combined forces of Midian and Amalek. This dream with the interpretation dispelled all Gideon's remaining doubts ; and he worshipped God, and returned to prepare his troops for battle.

Q. What weapons did they make use of ?

A. They took each a trumpet, and an earthen pitcher-containing a lamp, in their hands, and in the silence of night surrounded the enemies camp ; standing at given distances that their number might appear the greater. Upon a signal given by their commanders they broke their pitchers, discovered their lamps, blew their trumpets, and cried, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon !

Q. What effect did this stratagem produce ?

A. The Midianites thus roused from sleep, by the blast of the trumpets, and the shouts of Gideon's army ; seeing their camp surrounded with lights, supposed themselves attacked on every side, and in their terror slew each other, instead of their opponents.

Q. Did the Israelites pursue after the enemy ?

A. As soon as the Midianites began their flight, Gideon sent messengers to all the neighboring tribes to march in pursuit of the enemy. The tribe of Ephraim posted themselves at the fords of Jordan, and intercepted two Midianish princes, Oreb and Zeeb, whom they slew and brought their heads to Gideon. Zeba and Zalmuna, two other princes of Midian, escaped over the fords of Jordan with 150 men.

Q. Were the Ephraimites offended with Gideon for not inviting them earlier to join his standard.

A. They were angry, and perhaps more zealous from his being of the tribe of Manasseh, which, by birth claimed the precedence over that of Ephraim. Gideon, though he acted expressly by divine command, claimed no glory for himself

but highly extolled the achievements of the Ephraimites, who had taken Oreb and Zeeb, at the same time, reminding them that the glory belonged neither to them nor him, but to the Lord. The modesty and prudence of Gideon upon this occasion, shew him to be a worthy successor of Moses and Joshua ; who, like him, had sufficient greatness of mind to treat the insolent with humility and the angry with contempt.

Q. Was this the conclusion of the war ?

A. No : Gideon, with his three hundred men, pursued after Zeba and Zalmunna beyond the Jordan. Being weary and faint with long watching, fasting and fatigue, they applied to the inhabitants of Succoth for refreshment ; but the citizens of Succoth, seeing them deserted by the other Israelites, despised their small number, and would not afford them the least assistance, tauntingly enquiring if the princes, Zeba and Zalmunna, were in his hand, that they should risque their displeasure by giving bread to his army. Gideon deferred his indignation for the present, but acquainted the rulers of Succoth, that when the Lord had enabled him to destroy the kings of Midian, he would chastise them severely for their insolence to him as the ruler of Israel, and their disaffection to the cause of God.

Q. Did Gideon obtain assistance from the inhabitants of Penuel ?

A. He made the same request to them that he had made to Succoth, and received a denial equally insolent. Trusting in the tower by which the city was secured, as they conceived, alike from the armies of Midian and Israel, the rulers set them both at defiance. Gideon informed them when he returned in peace, he would break down the tower in which they confided.

Q. Did Gideon execute his threats ?

A. After defeating the remainder of the Midianites, he returned the same night, bringing Zeba and Zalmunna prisoners, and took signal vengeance on the cities of Succoth and Penuel.

Q. What became of Zeba and Zalmunna ?

A. Gideon slew them, though they were his prisoners, to avenge the murder of his brethren whom these princes had slain at Mount Tabor.

Q. Had the Israelites peace after this signal victory ?

A. Their enemies were so effectually weakened that they did not attempt to molest Israel during the life of Gideon, who executed the office of judge forty years.

D

Q. Did not Gideon at first refuse to be made the ruler of Israel?

A. The people, in the first moments of joy and gratitude, would have made him an absolute governor, and continued the office in his family; but Gideon refused to accept the office of perpetual governor, or the hereditary succession to his children, reminding them God was their king; yet as the servant of Jehovah, he was willing to administer justice and lead the armies of Israel.

Q. What faults are recorded of Gideon?

A. He sullied the glory of his warlike achievements, and tarnished his religious character, by collecting all the golden ear-rings that had been taken from the enemy, which amounted to 1700 shekels of gold, beside rich garments. With this treasure, he made an ephod, which appears to have been a rich garment, like that worn by the high priest.— Learned men have supposed that Gideon made a breast plate of judgment, by which to enquire of the Lord, and that a regular place for sacrifice was set up at Orphah, which, being contrary to the law of God, proved a snare to the people and a ruin to Gideon and his house.

Q. How can we reconcile this breach of God's law in Gideon with his character of a good man?

A. Gideon, like the rest of our imperfect race, was a weak, erring mortal, and though, "through faith he put to flight the armies of aliens," yet he was liable to mistake, and probably supposed that, as God had commanded him to officiate once as a priest, he might continue to do so occasionally, without going up to the tabernacle; but, whether this was the case, or whether the ephod he made was merely a trophy in memory of his victory, it is evident his conduct was improper.— This ephod proved a new source of idolatry to the Israelites, and prepared their minds for open rebellion against God.— Upon the death of Gideon they forsook his worship entirely, and set up Baal, whom they worshipped under the name of Baal-berith, or the Lord of the covenant.

Q. How were the people punished for this defection?

A. The Lord manifested his displeasure by giving them up to their own vile passions, to teach them, that a depraved people could be punished without the aid of foreign enemies: Gideon had misled the people by the ephod which he made at Orphah, and as his family had grievously offended by joining themselves to Baal-berith, they were, of course, the first sufferers.

Q. What were the sufferings of Gideon's family?

A. Gideon through an absurd custom had multiplied wives, and had three-score and ten sons, exclusive of Abimelech, who was the son of his concubine. It is probable that Gideon neglected the religious instruction of his children and that they were ripe for destruction. Though he had refused the proffered kingdom for himself and sons, yet his ambitious mistress, by calling her son Abimelech, conceived the idea of his being one day a king. Accordingly on the death of his father, with the assistance of his mother's brethren, he prevailed with the men of Shechem to choose him king. They gave him money out of the temple of Baal-berith to hire guards to enforce his new dignity. This first use this impious tyrant made of his power was to murder all his brethren, except Jotham, the youngest of Gideon's sons, who found means to escape.

Q. What is recorded of Jotham ?

A. Jotham ascended mount Gerizim, which hang over the city of Shechem, and addressed the multitude, who were assembled below to celebrate the coronation of their new king. He most forcibly pointed out, by a parable, the folly and wickedness of their conduct, in making the basest of Gideon's sons their king, and murdering the rest. In this parable, which you will find in Judges, chap. ix. 7th, 15th; he describes the trees as soliciting the olive, the fig and the vine, to become their king. Each refused to cast away the peculiar excellency with which it had been endowed by God, to reign over the trees of the forest. At length the bramble being invited to accept the proffered honour, replied, "if ye, in truth, desire me for your king, come, and put your trust under my shadow; if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon." Jotham concluded by applying the fable to the murder of his father's family. "If ye have," said he, "observed either justice, or gratitude, in murdering the sons of your late benefactor, who possessed qualities worthy to govern, had Israel occasion for a king, but who humbly and wisely declined the suffrages of Israel; and if ye have done wisely in bestowing the regal dignity on Abimelech; then rejoice ye in your king, and may he rejoice in you: but if not, let fire from Abimelech devour the men of Shechem and the house of Millo; and let fire from Shechem and the house of Millo consume Abimelech.

Q. What became of Jotham ?

A. He fled to the city of Beer, which lay near Jerusalem and dwelt there, secure from his brother's power, which was of short duration, as Jotham had foreseen. A spirit of dissension arose among the Shechemites, and they made Gaal,

the son of a Canaanitish slave, their leader; who falsely boasted his descent from Hamor the father of Shechem.

Q. Did Gaal succeed in destroying Abimelech?

A. He did not: Zebul, the governor of the town, informed Abimelech of all Gaal's proceedings. Abimelech marched against the city and took it, cut off Gaal with his followers, massacred the inhabitants of Shechem, razed the city to the ground and strewed it with salt. Some of the chief persons in Shechem took refuge in the temple of Baal-berith, hoping that Abimelech would regard the sacredness of the place; but Abimelech regarded neither God or man. He reduced the idol fane to ashes, with all who had fled there for security.

Q. What became of Abimelech?

A. After the destruction of Shechem, he laid siege to Theber a city supposed to have been confederate with Shechem. Having taken the city, he thought to have destroyed by fire all the inhabitants, who had taken refuge in a strong tower within the city, as he had done with those who had sought shelter in the temple of Baal; but going too near the tower, he was mortally wounded by a piece of millstone from the hand of a woman: in a vain attempt to avoid the disgrace of such a death, he ordered his armour bearer to slay him, who obeyed his command. Thus Israel was freed from a vile murderer, usurper and tyrant. In these bloody transactions we see the justice of God in punishing both Abimelech and the Shechemites, and the application made by Jotham of his parable wonderfully verified.

Q. Who was the next Judge?

A. Tola, which name signifies a worm. If he assumed that name, in consequence of the humble opinion he entertained of his own merits, he was the better fitted to be the Lord's instrument in doing good. It does not appear that he engaged in any war. Israel, under his wise and peaceful administration, enjoyed a happy tranquility of 23 years. Tola was of the tribe of Issachar, but he fixed his residence at mount Ephraim, probably that he might be in the centre of Israel, and near the tabernacle.

Q. Who judged Israel after the death of Tola?

A. Jair, a Gileadite, He had thirty sons who inherited some of the cities which fell to the lot of their ancestors, and assisted their father in the administration of justice, riding on asses from place to place, in the humble manner of the ancient judges. The Israelites under the government of Tola and the beginning of Jair's administration, probably had their happi-

est years; but, during the latter part of Jair's government, the people became corrupt, and when Jair could no longer restrain them from idolatry, he was not able to defend them from their enemies.

Q. What enemies had dominion over Israel at this time?

A. The Philistines attacked them on the west, and the Amonites on the east, so that the whole land was sorely oppressed for 18 years.

Q. How were the people delivered from their oppressive neighbours?

A. Their calamities brought them to a sense of their guilt. They put away their strange gods and humbled themselves before the Lord, and he gave them a deliverer. [B. C. 1187 : A. M. 2817.]

Q. Who was this deliverer?

A. Jephthah, a Gileadite, who had been banished from his native city, by his brethren, on account of the infamy of his birth. Jephthah appears to have been early distinguished for his valour, and probably this was the chief cause of his being envied by his brethren, and feared by the inhabitants of Gilead, who concurred in driving him from his country.

Q. Where did Jephthah reside during his banishment?

A. He dwelt in a place called Tob, where a number of men of broken fortunes and unsettled dispositions resorted to him, and he became their leader. Jephthah and his troops appear to have subsisted by making reprisals on the enemies of Israel, and, by this course of life, became brave and experienced soldiers. The elders of Gilead, feeling the want of Jephthah's talents, sent an embassy requesting his return, and appointing him their commander. They likewise bound themselves, by a solemn oath, to submit to him as their judge, if the Lord delivered them from their enemies by his hand.

Q. What oath did Jephthah take before he engaged in the war?

A. He engaged to devote to the Lord, whatever should first come out of the doors of his house to meet him, if he would grant him the victory, and that he would offer it as a burnt sacrifice.

Q. How can we reconcile this action with the true faith of Jephthah?

A. Jephthah's vow was rash, selfish, and a breach of God's law; he might reasonably have expected to have met some unclean animal, a favorite dog or cat, which were not al-

lowed of in sacrifice, but it was most probable that one of his own family would come out to meet him. Jephthah had resided so long among idolaters, and been so familiar with their abominations, that he appears to have been tinctured with their superstition, and confounded the several laws concerning vows and sacrifices; not duly distinguishing the difference between devoting the enemies of God to utter destruction, as a magistrate, and offering an innocent being in sacrifice, over whose life he had no power, and which was expressly forbidden, as an abomination in the sight of God.—Saul appears to have made the same mistake, when he condemned Jonathan, as the people undoubtedly did right in rescuing him from death.

Q. What success had Jephthah against the Ammonites?

A. He sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, reminding him of the kindness shown to his countrymen by the Israelites, in not molesting them when they conquered Canaan; and required that he should cease to molest Israel, who neither had injured nor intended to injure him. But if he would not recall his forces, and be content with his own proper inheritance, the war would become just and God would give Israel the victory. The king of Ammon not agreeing to the proposed terms of accommodation, they came to an engagement, and Jephthah was victorious.

Q. What victim came to welcome the conquering chieftain?

A. His only and beloved child. God, by sending her, punished the sin of the father. Hearing of his victory, she came to meet him, at the head of a procession of young females, with timbrels, dances and other testimonials of rejoicing. At this affecting sight, Jephthah rent his clothes in the agony of grief, and acquainted his beloved child with her sad destiny.

Q. How did she support this affecting intelligence?

A. She received it with perfect composure, and submitted to her fate without a murmur, only requesting she might be permitted to retire to the mountains for two months and bewail her untimely destiny. To this her father consented. After which time she returned, and he did with her according to his vow.

Q. Is it certain Jephthah offered her in sacrifice?

A. Some learned men have supposed that he did not put her to death, but only devoted her to perpetual virginity; and that the daughters of Israel went every year to bewail with, not lament for the daughter of Jephthah. But as

we nowhere read in the Bible of men or women taking vows of celibacy, the deep distress discovered by Jephthah, the yearly lamentation made for her, not only by her own city, but by all the Israelitish women, seem to indicate that she was actually sacrificed. Jephthah was undoubtedly conscientious in what he did, but had he better understood the divine law, he would have found that his rash vow bound him to nothing but deep repentance, unless, perhaps, a sin offering for his guilt.

Q. But why did not the nation at large prevent the execution of Jephthah's vow ?

A. The whole nation appears to have been very ignorant in divine knowledge, during the time of the Judges. The sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter was not more atrocious, than the conduct of the whole nation in the war with Benjamin : there, they sacrificed not only one, but many innocent victims to the rash vows they had made.

Q. What further account does history give of Jephthah ?

A. Soon after Jephthah's return, the Ephraimites assembled, in a tumultuous manner, and demanded why he had dared to go to war without consulting them, and threatened him with the heaviest effects of their displeasure. At the same time they insulted the Gileadites, calling them fugitives of the children of Joseph, who had fled from justice and settled beyond Jordan.

Q. How did Jephthah's high spirit bear these insults ?

A. He returned a mild answer to their abusive language ; reminding them he had sent for their assistance, but they had refused to come : he had, therefore, with the assistance of heaven, gained a victory by his own people. This not satisfying the Ephraimites, a battle ensued, in which they were defeated with the loss of 4200 men. No further mention is made of Jephthah, except that he judged Israel six years, and that he was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

CHAP. III.

The Life of Hercules. The Argonautic expedition. The history of Minos. The Trojan war.

Q. What is recorded in profane history, deserving attention, during this age ?

A. The life of Hercules, who was a Theban by birth, and

is celebrated by the poets and historians for his gigantic strength, and his ability and exertions in defending the rights of the weak against the powerful, for which he was fabled to be the son of Jupiter.

Q. What are the principal events recorded of Hercules ?

A. The poets represent him, as hated by Juno from his infancy. She sent two serpents to destroy him in his cradle, but the undaunted child killed them both with his hands.— As he grew up, his extraordinary virtues and abilities exposed him to the envy and hatred of Eurystheus, his half brother. This tyrant attempted his destruction, by imposing several difficult and dangerous tasks upon him, which are called the twelve labours of Hercules. In these labours, (which are extravagant fables,) we can discover the arduous exertions of a hero who spent his life for the benefit of the human race. The serpents which he destroyed in his cradle, may mean two predominant passions which he inherited from nature, but overcame by education. The killing of the Nemean lion, the Hydra with many heads, and the other monsters which he destroyed, is supposed to picture forth the draining of a marsh, which was infested with poisonous serpents, and infected the air with pestilential vapours. The Grecian woods and mountains abounded with lions, boars, tygers and other wild animals, which often roamed from their haunts, and spread terror and desolation through the neighbouring villages. The country teemed with men of brutal strength and courage, who availed themselves of the weakness of government, to perpetrate horrid acts of cruelty. The first worthies of Greece, Hercules, Theseus, Castor and Pollux, animated with the useful, rather than the romantic spirit of chivalry, employed their valour in remedying the evils which threatened the existence of society. They not only destroyed monsters on land, but those which infested the sea. Hercules extended his conquest to the kingdom of Spain, where he erected two monuments of his glory on mounts Calpe and Abyla, called the pillars of Hercules to this day.

Q. What are we to understand by the Argonautic expedition ?

A. The establishment of the Apheclenic council brought the principal men of Greece acquainted with each other.— Emulation and love of glory prompted them to arms. Jason, Admetus and the other chieftains of Thessaly, equipped a small fleet ; the largest vessel was called Argo, which was of superior size and construction to any before known. Being prepared for war, they formed a plan of visiting for-

sign countries, to acquire wealth by plunder, and retort upon the inhabitants the injuries Greece had received from strangers. The standard erected by Jason was, in a short time, surrounded by the flower of the Grecian youth, who eagerly embraced this opportunity of adorning their high birth by manly valour. This expedition has been veiled under the allegory of the golden fleece, guarded by two bulls, breathing fire, and a dragon which never slept. The value of the royal treasure at Colchis had been highly extolled, and to get possession of it was the thing aimed at by the Argonautic expedition. The king's treasure being secured by a double wall and brazen doors, the fable of the golden fleece was easily invented by the poets. The mariner's compass is thought to have made a part of this treasure, whence the ship which carried it was supposed to be oracular, and to have given responses. Jason obtained this treasure by the assistance of Medea, daughter to the king of Colchis, a celebrated enchantress.

Q. Did this expedition produce any change of manners?

A. The Argonautic expedition had a happy effect in civilizing the manners of the Greeks, and in giving them a more noble spirit of enterprize. Strength and courage had, hitherto, been the only qualities admired; but from this time, they began to brighten the lustre of martial spirit by the more valuable virtues of justice and humanity.

Q. What was the next public enterprize of the Greeks?

A. The Theban war, which was undertaken by a combination of seven princes, to replace an exiled monarch upon his throne. This is the first expedition in which any colour of justice could be found to authorise the use of arms.

Q. Who was Minos?

A. There were two of that name who reigned in Crete.—The first pretended to be immediately inspired by the gods, from whom he derived an invaluable system of laws, which he was commanded to engrave on tables of brass. From Jupiter he received the regal sceptre, which entitled him to administer these laws, but which obliged him to respect them. How he acquired that extraordinary influence over his countrymen, which enabled him to enforce his authority, history does not inform us; but we may plainly discover that he borrowed his ideas of government, and the means of establishing it, from the laws of Moses. These laws were considered so wise as to enable Minos to be the judge of

Hell: yet they were very defective, relating chiefly to war. Minos was called the son of the ocean, probably from the numerous voyages he made.

Q. What is related of the second Minos?

A. He succeeded his father on the Cretan throne, and added the glory of arms to that of a legislator. Among other countries which became tributary, was Athens. The inhabitants of this city were doomed to send, every year, seven youths of each sex, to serve as slaves to the Cretan monarch, who had all his lands cultivated by slaves, which gave rise to the fable of their being devoured by a monster. These slaves were drawn by lot from among the inhabitants, who trembled at the annual return of the Cretan vessel. Discontents arose against Egeus, their king, for tamely submitting to the tribute. Theseus, his gallant son, offered himself as one of the victims; his virtues were already known to Minos, who was so much pleased with his voluntary sacrifice that he remitted the fine, and gave Theseus his daughter in marriage.

Q. What advantage did the Athenians derive from this alliance of Theseus?

A. He observed the happy effect produced upon the inhabitants of Crete, by the laws and government of Minos, and endeavored, on his accession to the throne of his father, to imitate them in his native country. The Athenians were not sufficiently civilized to admit of written laws, but he persuaded the scattered villages of Attica, to unite in religious ceremonies; to acknowledge the reciprocal obligation of prince and subject in peace as well as war. The improvement of domestic policy introduced into Attica, by the example of Crete and the wisdom of Theseus, were gradually adopted by the neighboring provinces. At the commencement of the Trojan war, all the Grecian states had embraced a uniform system of government.

Q. What was this system of government?

A. A limited monarchy, which united the independent spirit of European freedom, with the respectful veneration of Asiatic superstition; believing the authority of their kings divine, but considering that they had no longer title to the protection of the gods, than they continued to maintain the unalienable privileges of their subjects.

Q. Can you give me an account of the siege of Troy?

A. This celebrated siege was undertaken to recover He-

len, the wife of Menelaus, king of Alhycene, from the power of Paris, who had carried her off.

Q. What forces did the Greeks employ in this war?

A. The vessels collected together for transporting their forces into Asia amounted to twelve hundred sail. They were built with little ingenuity, moved by only one bench of oars and entirely unprovided with decks and anchors. The complement of soldiers varied in the different vessels, but the whole amount of the forces sent to Troy was an hundred and two thousand men.

Q. Who were the commanders of these forces?

A. Every prince had the direction of his own subjects, but Agamemnon, the brother of the injured Menelaus, bore the chief command.

Q. Where was Troy situated?

A. The kingdom of Priam, occupied the eastern banks of the Hellespont, the southern coast of the Propontis, and the northern shores of Egean. The length was about two hundred miles, but its breadth far less, being compressed between two seas and the lofty ridges of mount Ida. This delightful country excelled Greece in fruitfulness of soil and softness of climate, and instead of being harrassed by the continual incursions of northern savages, enjoyed the vicinity of the Phrygians and Lydians, nations described as flourishing in wealth and peace from the remotest antiquity.—Several provinces of Asiatic Greece, were in alliance with, or constituted part of the Trojan dominions.

Q. How long did the siege of Troy continue?

A. Ten years. Agamemnon had been more industrious in preparing a large army, than provident in contriving means by which it might be kept in the field. The provisions transported from Greece were soon exhausted, while their ignorance of war gave the Greeks little hopes of success. In order to supply the camp with provisions, some set themselves to cultivate the rich vales of the Chersonesus, whose unfortunate inhabitants had been recently expelled. Others had recourse to piracy, scoured the neighbouring seas, ravaged the unprotected coasts of the Hellespont, or demolished such unfortified places, as acknowledged the dominion of Troy. These ravages excited the rage of the Asiatics, and united them more heartily in the cause of their confederates. After nine unsuccessful summers, the misfortunes of the Greeks precipitated the downfall of Troy. A dreadful pestilence raged in the Grecian camp, a quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles their bravest warrior, weak-

ened the power of the besiegers. The Trojans acquired courage to leave their walls, and attack the Greeks in the open field. They were victorious in the first engagements; but having slain Patroclus the friend of Achilles, he was once more roused to arms. His return to the camp restored the declining fortune of his country; he slew Hector, whose patriotic valour had long been the firmest bulwark of his father's kingdom. The destruction of Troy soon followed.—The city was surprised and taken during the night, and most of the citizens perished by the sword.

Q. What effect did the expedition against Troy produce on the Grecian states?

A. A very unhappy one. The absence of their kings with all the military force of the country, left their respective kingdoms exposed to the machinations of ambitious subjects, and to the inroads of the more barbarous nations. The siege of Troy was almost as calamitous to Greece as to Troy.

Q. Did any of the Trojan princes escape the destruction of their capital?

A. Two only are mentioned: Antenor, who is supposed to be the founder of Padua, and Eneas, from whom the Romans claim their descent.

Q. At what period do you place the siege of Troy?

A. 508 years after the departure from Egypt; 1184 years before the Christian æra; A. M. 2820. These events may be considered as the fifth period of the world. To this epoch may be referred all that is true or beautiful in fabulous times.

CHAP. IV.

From the death of Jephthah to the reign of Saul.

Q. What remarkable events are recorded in sacred history?

A. After the death of Jephthah, several judges of inferior note ruled in different parts of the land of Israel. Among these Eli is the most worthy of notice. [B. C. 1175; A. M. 2838.] He united in his own person the dignity of high priest and judge; and, though a good man, brought much evil on his country, by neglecting the education of his sons.

These young men had not the fear of God in their hearts; nor the fear of reproof from their too indulgent father. By their debauchery and licentiousness they brought the offerings and worship of God into contempt, so that few attended the stated worship at the tabernacle, and the whole nation was in danger of sinking into idolatry. A remnant of praying souls was still left, and, in answer to their prayers, God raised up a deliverer in the person of Samson.

Q. Who was Samson?

A. He was a man whose birth and extraordinary prowess had been predicted to his parents by an angel, [B. C. 1177; A. M. 2387;] and a devoted Nuzarite to God, and was therefore bound not to shave his hair, which was to remain as a token of his obedience. It is probable, he was born about the time the Lord began to afflict his people on account of the sins introduced by the remissness of Eli's government.

Q. What remarkable acts are recorded of Samson?

A. When very young, without any weapon, he slew a lion, which attacked him. He sought every pretence to revenge upon the Philistines the wrongs his country had received: and though, by his miraculous strength, he gave evident proof that God had raised him up as an extraordinary deliverer to Israel, yet they did not regard the peculiar interposition of Providence, by assisting him to throw off the yoke of the Philistines; on the contrary, they reproved him for offending the Philistines, and by his own consent delivered him bound with cords into their hands.

Q. What was the event of this transaction?

A. The Philistines on seeing their enemy bound before them, gave a shout; upon which the spirit of God came mightily upon Samson, he burst the cords which bound him, and, rushing upon his enemies with no other weapon than the jaw bone of an ass, laid a thousand men dead at his feet. Elated with this surprising victory, he seems to have celebrated his own, instead of the praises of God; for which sin, he was made immediately sensible by such extreme thirst, that in an agony he called upon God for deliverance. Having made his exulting servant sensible of his dependence on his maker, God miraculously supplied his thirst, by causing a spring to arise from the place where the jaw-bone lay, which Samson called En-hakkore, or the well of him that cried.

Q. Did not this extraordinary victory bring the Israelites to acknowledge Samson as a deliverer from God?

A. They raised him to the office of Judge; but they do

not appear to have assisted him, by their own exertions, to throw off the yoke of the Philistines.

Q. What farther account can you give me of Samson ?

A. His whole character appears a contradiction ; and did not the Apostle number him among those who died in the faith, we might justly conclude that though he was an instrument of God's power, he was not a subject of grace. His prevailing sin was a passion for women devoid of virtue. This led him weakly to acknowledge to Delilah, his favorite mistress, wherein his great strength lay. This unprincipled woman, caused his hair to be shaven, while he slept, and sold him to the Philistines, who put out his eyes, loaded him with fetters, and compelled him to be a menial servant in the prison of Gaza.

Q. Did Samson's afflictions bring him to a sense of his guilt ?

A. The loss of his bodily sight opened the eyes of his understanding. He does not appear to have believed himself, that breaking the vow God had imposed upon him, would have been so fatal. But now being convinced by sad reality of his madness and folly, he appears to have exercised true repentance. In the mean time, the locks of his hair began to grow again, as a token of the returning favor of God. The Philistines, who considered their enemy entirely in their power, held a great feast to their god Dagon. On this occasion Samson was brought out before the princes and the people, that they might renew their triumph, not only over him, but the triumph of Dagon over the God of Israel.

Q. How did Samson brook this insult ?

A. Samson, having amused the Philistines, requested leave to rest himself against the two main pillars of the temple, in which they were assembled, and, having earnestly besought the Lord to grant him strength once more, overturned the idolatrous fane, and buried the whole assembly in its ruins.

Q. Was this death a breach of the sixth commandment ?

A. There is a vast difference between rushing uncalled into the presence of God, from a proud impatience and contempt of life, when it is rendered miserable by a man's own misconduct, and being willing to lay it down for the honour of God and welfare of his people. Samson can no more be called a self-murderer, than the soldier, who perishes in battle, fighting for the good of his country. Neither can his prayer for the destruction of his enemies be deemed a breach of God's law, for it was not dictated by private revenge, but

zeal for the cause of Israel and Israel's God, which he had lately so shamefully deserted. The immediate answer of his prayer is a proof that it was dictated by the Holy Spirit. The great number slain at Samson's death humbled the Philistines, and they did not prevent his friends from giving him an honourable burial. He died young, having governed Israel but twenty years.

Q. Did Eli continue in his office of high priest after Samson's death?

A. Yes; he still held the office, but he had become very old, and the iniquity of his sons had increased to a most deplorable height.

Q. Who was Samuel?

A. A pious youth, who had been dedicated to God from his infancy, and was employed at this time as a door keeper in the temple.

Q. Was not Samuel a prophet?

A. Yes: God appeared to him while he was a child, and revealed to him his intention of speedily punishing the iniquity of Eli's house; because his sons had made themselves vile and he restrained them not.

Q. Did Samuel inform Eli of his approaching punishment?

A. He was at first afraid to make known to Eli the awful predictions concerning his posterity, but, being solemnly adjured by the high priest to hide nothing, he disclosed the whole purport of the vision. Eli acknowledged the sentence to be just, and submitted with humble resignation to the will of God.

Q. What was the doom denounced against Eli's house?

A. That both his sons should be cut off in one day; that the office of high priest should be taken from him, and conferred on another branch of Aaron's family, and that there should not be a single man of his posterity, who should live to be old, in all future generations.

Q. In what manner was this prophecy fulfilled?

A. The destruction of such a number of Philistines at the death of Samson, encouraged the Israelites to take arms in order to free themselves from their haughty masters. But God was justly incensed against them, and permitted them to be ignominiously repulsed with the loss of four thousand men. Under an idea of animating their own troops, and striking a panic into the enemy, they brought the ark of the covenant into the camp. This absurd project was attended

with the most fatal consequences ; for Eli's two sons, with a great number of Hebrews, were put to the sword, and the ark itself fell into the hands of the Philistines.

Q. How did Eli bear the afflicting intelligence ?

A. He received the account of his sons' death without expressing any uncommon degree of anguish. But, when he heard that for his sins, the ark of God had fallen into the hands of the enemy, he fell from his seat and expired. His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phineas, expired upon the same occasion, after giving birth to a son whom she named Ichabod, to signify that the glory of Israel was departed. [B. C. 1095.]

Q. Where did the Philistines place the ark of God ?

A. In the temple of Dagon ; for, by his assistance, they supposed they had overcome the God of Israel. The idol set up by the Damites was not yet removed, and the capture of the ark was a token of God's anger against this, and the other sins of his people.

Q. How long did the ark remain with the Philistines ?

A. About seven months. The morning after the ark was deposited in Dagon's temple, they found the image of Dagon fallen on the ground before this sacred symbol of Divine Power. Thinking this only accidental, they replaced the image. But the next morning, they found their idol in the same situation, with his head and both his hands cut off upon the threshold. The image of Dagon is supposed to have been formed with head and arms like a man, and the remainder of his body like a fish. When the head and hands were broken off, a deformed trunk alone remained. But, instead of learning from this event to despise so senseless an idol, the Philistines perpetuated the memory of their disgrace, by holding the very threshold sacred where Dagon had fallen. The people of Ashdod were also visited with a distressing distemper, which they justly considered as a judgment from God. They, therefore, removed the ark to Gath, but as the same affliction followed it, both thither and to Ekron, it was at length dismissed, by the council of Philistine priests, with suitable trespass offerings.

Q. What method did the Philistines pursue in restoring the ark ?

A. They were unwilling fully to believe, that their afflictions were chastisements from the God of Israel, and framed an artful device for putting it to the trial, whether it was the same God which punished the Egyptians, who had wasted their cities, or if their afflictions were accidental. In

HISTORY.

accordance with this plan, they placed the ark upon a new cart, with their trespass offering. Then tying two kine to the cart, which had never been yoked before, and whose calves were left at home, they set them out in the public road—requiring by this action an additional proof of Jehovah's power. If these kine took the road to Bethshemesh, (which was a city of priests on the borders of Israel,) they agreed it would be a proof that their afflictions were from God, but if the kine went a different way, the Philistines determined to ascribe all their evils to chance.

Q. Was it not very presumptuous in the Philistines to require this additional proof of Jehovah's power.

A. It was : but God was pleased to overrule their unbelief for the manifestation of his glory. That two kine which had never been yoked, should keep quietly along the road without a driver, and while they showed the force of instinct in lowing for their calves, should by a stronger impulse be urged forward to the very place which the Philistines mentioned, is a most astonishing miracle, and completed the triumph of the ark over the idolatrous Philistines.

Q. How did the Bethshemites receive the ark ?

A. They were at first filled with joy. They placed the ark upon a great stone in the field where the kine stopped, slew the kine, and, with wood of the cart, offered them as a burnt offering to the Lord. In this they behaved very properly. But they erred soon after, by presumptuously examining the interior of the ark, the out side of which was not to be uncovered, even by the Levites who carried it. For this irreverence, God punished them by the immediate death of multitudes.

Q. Did this punishment produce repentance ?

A. They appear to have been more terrified than humbled ; like the Philistines, they were anxious to have the ark removed from them, and solicited the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim to remove it to their city.

Q. Did the citizens of Kirjath-jearim accede to their proposal ?

A. The inhabitants of that city, though they were not of the tribe of Levi, readily accepted the offer, convinced that the ark was a pledge of prosperity, when treated with reverence. They therefore hastened to bring this symbol of divine presence to their city, placed it in the house of Abinadab, and sanctified Eleazer his son to keep it.

Q. Were not Abinadab and Eleazer of the house of Aaron ?

A. We are no where informed that they were. And no mention is made of the priests or Levites, in the removal of the ark to Kirjath-jearim, it appears that God dispensed with the irregularity of the citizens, and permitted them to officiate in the room of the Levites, who had forfeited his favour by their sins.

Q. How long did the ark remain at Bethshemesh ?

A. Until the reign of David. The people, being under the power of the Philistines, were careless of the ark and of the worship of God. In the mean time, Samuel grew up and became a zealous preacher of holiness, and, by the assistance of divine grace, was so successful, that a general reformation took place. The whole nation lamented the departure of God's presence, and besought Samuel to pray for them.

Q. What answer did Samuel return to their request ?

A. He replied, that, if they were sincere in their request, they must publicly renounce idolatry and re-establish the worship of Jehovah. On that condition, only, would he engage to intercede with God to deliver them from the bondage of the Philistines.

Q. Did the elders of Israel comply with Samuel's injunctions ?

A. Not only the elders, but most of the nation convened by Samuel's command at Mizpeh, where they publicly confessed their sins ; Samuel offered sacrifices and prayed to God for deliverance from their enemies. His prayer was heard.

Q. In what manner was deliverance granted ?

A. The Philistines, considering the public convention as a signal for war, attacked the Israelites, expecting to surprise and make an easy conquest of them. The Israelites, though alarmed at first, yet trusting in the favour of Heaven, went forth to battle, and gained a complete victory, drove the Philistines out of the country, and recovered all the cities they formerly owned in the neighbourhood of Gath and Ekron.

Q. How long did Israel continue in this prosperous condition ?

A. During the reign of Samuel, who governed Israel with equity and wisdom. He made an annual circuit round Beth-el, Gilgal and Mizpeh, to administer justice ; but made Ramah, the place of his nativity, his residence. When Samuel grew too old to bear alone the whole weight of govern-

ment, he entrusted two of his sons with the magistracy of Beersheba. These young men did not follow the worthy example of their father, but took bribes and perverted judgment, which provoked the elders of Israel to demand a king of Samuel, that they might be governed like the neighbouring nations.

Q. How was Samuel pleased with this request?

A. He justly considered it as a complaint against God, who had appointed the mode of government in Israel; as indicative of pride, and a wish to imitate the splendour of the neighbouring courts. Samuel therefore deferred giving an answer, till he consulted the Lord upon a subject of such importance.

Q. What answer did Samuel receive from God?

A. The Lord commanded Samuel to comply with their request: at the same time informed them, that, in rejecting him for their judge, they had also rejected God for their king, and must not expect that prosperity which they had experienced when they fully obeyed his laws. Under the government of Moses, Joshua, and the Judges, the people had been not only exempt from oppression, but from taxes of all kinds; but kingly government could not be supported without an income. If the Israelites intended to vie with the surrounding nations in splendour, they must not only sacrifice their private property to support the luxury and magnificence of a court, but part with their sons to supply an army for the king's ambition or defence, or to serve as guards in his palace. Their daughters, also, would be taken from under the parental roof, for servants to the ladies of the court. For, by such exactions the monarchs of these countries maintained their power and splendour.

Q. Are we to suppose, by this narration, that a kingly government is displeasing to the Almighty?

A. We are not. Crowned heads are spoken of with the greatest respect, both by the Deity, his prophets and apostles. The crime of the Israelites lay in their ingratitude to God, whom they rejected from being king over them. Not content with the humble condition of the Lord's servants, they wished, like the builders of Babel, to get to themselves a great name.

Q. When Samuel delivered the message from God to the elders of Israel, did they not withdraw their request?

A. They were so anxious for a change of government, that they still persevered in demanding a king. Amidst the sin and folly of this conduct, it should be noted to their com-

commendation, that they showed great respect to Samuel, in relying implicitly upon his judgment, and not attempting to appoint a king for themselves. The history of the world cannot afford another instance of such moderation. A whole nation determined to have a king, and no person either attempting to gain the office himself, or proposing any other person to the people, but referring the whole to God.

Q. Whom did God appoint for their king?

A. Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Q. In what manner did God make his will known?

A. God acquainted Samuel that he would the next day, during the usual time of sacrifice, send the person to him, whom he had chosen as the ruler of his people Israel. Saul, who had been travelling through the country in search of his father's asses, came at the appointed time, to enquire of Samuel if he should be able to find them; and the Spirit of God acquainted Samuel that he was their future king: Samuel received Saul with due reverence, placed him in the chief seat at the feast, and anointed him next morning as king of Israel.

Q. What was Saul's conduct on receiving this unexpected honour?

A. He was greatly surprised; for he appears, at that time, to have been of an humble spirit. Samuel, after giving him instructions relative to his duty as a king, acquainted him with a number of incidents which would happen to him that day. This he did as a confirmation of the divine authority by which he had anointed him.

Q. What effect did the fulfilment of Samuel's prediction have upon Saul?

A. He was inspired with courage to undertake the government of Israel. His mind was enlarged by wisdom from God, and his heart appears to have received religious impressions, which for a time regulated his conduct.

Q. Were the Israelites pleased with the choice God had made for them?

A. Saul was uncommonly beautiful in his person, and majestic in his deportment; his stature exceeded the tallest Hebrew, and, when Samuel presented him to the people, as the choice of Heaven, the air rang with repeated acclamations of "God save the king;" though a party of profligate persons pretended to despise him on account of his youth, and refused to acknowledge him as their lawful sovereign. Samuel, having acquainted the people with the prerogatives of the prince, and the privileges of the people, dismissed the assembly.

CHAP. V.

The Reign of Saul

Q. Did Saul enter immediately upon his kingly office?
[E. C. 1075.]

A. No. He found himself despised by some and neglected by others of the Israelites. He, therefore, returned quietly to his farm, waiting for the time when Providence should draw him from obscurity. This time soon arrived; the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, being closely besieged by Nahash, king of the Ammonites, offered to capitulate, but could obtain no better terms than the loss of every man's right eye. The distressed inhabitants entreated for seven days respite, which Nahash granted, not supposing the Israelites were in any condition to relieve the city; and that by this respite the nation of Israel would be the more deeply disgraced.

Q. Did the inhabitants of Gilead apply to Saul for assistance?

A. They sent messengers immediately to Gibeah, where they met Saul returning from the field. He was fired with indignation at the indignity offered his country; in a spirited, yet humble manner, he summoned the attendance of the people; assuming, for the first time, regal authority, yet adding the name of Samuel, to avoid needless offence.

Q. Did the people obey the summons?

A. Through the influence of the Divine Spirit, a vast multitude was made willing to follow Saul to battle. Some apprehension of this war, had been one inducement to ask for a king. Such was the ardour with which they marched to the relief of their brethren, that they performed a march of 50 miles in about 24 hours, rescued their trembling countrymen, surprised and defeated the enemy, and drove them from the country.

Q. Were the Israelites content to have Saul continued in office after this victory?

A. The success of this expedition inspired the Israelites with such zeal for their sovereign, that they eagerly proposed to put those persons to death who had refused to acknowledge his authority. But Saul generously checked their zeal, and refused to have the commencement of his reign, and the glory of that day in which God had crowned his arms with victory, stained by shedding the blood of his personal enemies.

Q. What method did Samuel take to justify his administration?

A. The people being assembled at Gilgal, where they had celebrated their late victories with sacrifices, and confirmed the kingdom to Saul, Samuel embraced this opportunity to appeal to the people and their king, to judge if he had not ruled Israel with perfect integrity, even from his childhood to the present day. The people with one voice acknowledged the equity of his government.

Q. How long did Samuel judge Israel?

A. He is supposed to have been about 13 when Eli died, and 38 when he assembled the people at Mizpeh, and at this time about 60. From a child he had been labouring for the good of his people, and now, when he was old and grey-headed, they had rejected him.

Q. How did he convince his countrymen of their guilt?

A. After recapitulating all the wonders which God had wrought for his people, he convinced them of their ingratitude and unbelief, by praying that God would send a storm of thunder and rain, which took place immediately, though it was then wheat harvest, when rain was very uncommon. This storm, which was doubtless violent, being predicted and called for by Samuel, greatly alarmed the consciences of the people, and they entreated Samuel to pray for them that they perished not for their great sins.

Q. In what manner did Samuel compose the agitated spirits of his countrymen?

A. He exhorted them not to fear destruction; for if they obeyed the laws of God, he would grant them his special favour, and would direct the counsels of their king, as he had done those of their judges; but if they or their king rebelled against him, he would cast them off.

Q. What was the next war in which Saul was engaged?

A. In the second year of his reign, the Philistines came against him with a very large army, to avenge the garrison of Geba, which had been recently cut off by Jonathan, the son of Saul. The Israelites were overwhelmed with consternation, at the sight of this formidable force, and either refused to obey their king, when summoned to battle, or speedily deserted his standard, and fled in great numbers to caverns and thick forests for shelter: Others retreated beyond Jordan, and basely left the land of promise open to the incursions of their enemy. The few who remained with Saul, trembled as they followed him to the field of battle. To add to the general consternation, the Philistines had craftily deprived

the Hebrews of all kinds of weapons; so that when Saul came to examine his little army, there was neither sword or spear found in the hands of any man except the king and his son Jonathan.

Q. How could this be so soon after the glorious victory gained over the Ammonites?

A. During the forty years in which the Philistines governed Israel, they were forbidden to practice the trade of smiths. After the termination of that slavery, the Israelites did not readily resume the trade. The Philistines had garrisons in many parts of the land, and the Israelites resorted to the smiths dwelling in those garrisons, for such work as they needed. We may readily conceive, that the Philistines would take every method to prevent the Hebrews from obtaining arms, particularly at this time, when they expected a war with Saul. The Israelites used bows, slings, and javelins in war, and with these it is probable the people were armed; while those who had armour in the late war, had deserted, Providence so ordering events, that they who expected to look formidable under kingly government, might appear contemptible; not that the Lord had forsaken his people, but as a lesson of humility, to teach them not to depend upon swords or spears, but on the Almighty, for victory.

Q. Was not Saul greatly discouraged at his situation?

A. He was: Samuel the prophet, had commanded him to wait his arrival, before he engaged the enemy: Saul waited seven-days in this distressed situation, and as Samuel did not arrive, he ventured to offer the sacrifices without his presence, and probably officiated as priest himself. The victim was scarcely consumed, when Samuel arrived, and reproved Saul for his impatience. Saul endeavoured to excuse his conduct, from the urgent necessity of his affairs. Samuel informed him that he had acted foolishly, in disobeying the commandment of God, which had been given him as a test of his faith; that, for this act, the kingdom should be taken from him, and conferred upon a more obedient sovereign. Samuel, after uttering this prediction, departed from Saul.

Q. Did Saul take any measures to move God to reverse this decree?

A. It seems he did not; but, after Samuel's departure, he appears to have sent for Ahiah, the grandson of Eli, who was then high priest, who brought with him his robes of ceremony, with the Urim and Thummim, and the Ark of the Covenant also. Saul, having these tokens of the divine presence; waited for the enemies' approach, though not with that courage which a proper conduct would have inspired.

Q. How was Saul and his unarmed forces protected from the Philistines?

A. The hand of God was visible in restraining the vast army of the Philistines from assaulting the small company of the Israelites. They sent out three detachments to plunder the fertile territories of Canaan, but kept the main body of the army entrenched in a fortified camp, in a situation almost inaccessible.

Q. Which of the Israelites had the courage to attack this great army in their advantageous situation?

A. Jonathan the son of Saul, (excited no doubt by a divine impulse,) proposed to his armour-bearer that they two should make an assault upon the Philistine camp, and perhaps God would deliver Israel by their hands; observing that God could save by two as easily as by a mighty host. Jonathan's armour-bearer, being a man of the same spirit with himself, readily consented to the proposal.

Q. Was not this a presumptuous action, tempting God to work a miracle for their deliverance?

A. Jonathan knew the Israelites were the covenant people of God, who were oppressed by the uncircumcised Philistines: he expected the Lord would appear for them, in an extraordinary manner, as he had done for their fathers. Yet, not to be too presumptuous, he asked a token from God, as a proof that his faith was founded upon a sure basis.

Q. What was the token?

A. Jonathan proposed to pass over unto the enemies' camp, and if the Philistines warned them to tarry till they were attacked, they would consider it as a divine monition to keep their station, and act only upon the defensive; but, if they challenged them to come up to their camp, they would consider it a signal that God intended to prosper their endeavours, and would climb up the steep rock and attack the enemy.

Q. What success had they in this enterprise?

A. When the Philistines perceived Jonathan and his armour-bearer, they insultingly invited them to ascend the rock; they did so, and attacked the enemy, who were seized with such trembling and fear, that they did not attempt to defend themselves: Jonathan and his armour-bearer slew about thirty men. An earthquake, which took place at the same time, increased their terror: So great was their consternation, that not only the garrison, but the whole army quaked with fear, and mistaking each other for the Israelites, whom they supposed to be in the midst of their camp, they

slew one another. Saul's centinels, perceiving the enemy to be in confusion, acquainted the king, who immediately numbered the people, to find who had gone out to attack the enemy, and found to his great astonishment, that only Jonathan and his armour-bearer were missing.

Q. What course did Saul pursue upon this discovery?

A. He commanded Ahiah the priest to bring the ark before him, and consult the Lord, whether he ought to attack the Philistines or not; justly questioning if it were proper for him to assist in a work which God had begun without him: in the mean time, Saul perceiving the confusion in the enemy's camp increased, suffered his impatient spirit again to overcome him, as it had done on a former occasion, and, instead of waiting for Ahiah's answer, hastily determined to march against the enemy, without ascertaining whether it was the will of God to accept his services.

Q. Were his services accepted?

A. It pleased God not only to employ Saul's little army, but the captives who had been taken by the enemy, as well as the deserters and fugitives, in crushing the Philistines.

Q. What folly was Saul guilty of in this battle?

A. Of rashly and wickedly prohibiting his followers from tasting any food, on penalty of an awful curse, devoting the offender to utter destruction; adding, not that the Lord, but that I, may be avenged of my enemies; proudly arrogating to himself the honor of the victory. The people, fearing the curse, abstained not only from food, but from tasting honey which lay in their way, and with which they might have refreshed themselves without loss of time, and retained strength to have made a much greater slaughter of the Philistines. Jonathan, who knew not of his father's curse, tasted the honey when he was faint with hunger, and was sensibly revived. In the evening, the people being faint with hunger and fatigue, were tempted hastily to kill the cattle they had taken, and eat before the flesh was drained of the blood, directly contrary to the law, until they were restrained by Saul's authority.

Q. How was Saul made acquainted with Jonathan's delinquency?

A. When the people were refreshed, Saul proposed to pursue and exterminate the enemy. Ahiah the high priest, advised him first to consult the Lord by Urim and Thummim, whether he would grant him success. Saul consented; when no answer was returned, the king justly concluded that the Lord was offended, and desired to discover the cause.

F

Had he possessed any degree of self knowledge, he might justly have discovered it in his own pride and self will. The Lord, however, was pleased that the conduct of Jonathan, who had unwarily exposed himself to the curse denounced by his father, should be discovered, as the reason why he would not at this time answer the enquiries of the high priest; that the people might be convinced of their folly, in rejecting the government of a wise and pious prophet, whose prayers procured them blessings, for a young, proud and ambitious king, whose curses brought wrath upon them. Before the lots were cast, Saul, with the same rash and profane spirit as in the former curse, swore, that if the lot fell upon Jonathan, he should die, without knowing whether the crime committed deserved death, or whether it might not be expiated by a sin-offering.

Q. When Saul discovered Jonathan to be the offender, did he still hold to his resolution of depriving him of life?

A. Saul, without any humiliation for his own sin in thus afflicting Israel, pretending great zeal for the glory of God and the obligation of an oath, but in reality tenacious of his own will and authority, proceeded, without any relenting of paternal affection, to pronounce sentence upon his valiant and pious son; but the people, who felt that the king was the real offender, rescued him from his father.

Q. Were there any more remarkable events in this reign?

A. After this important victory, Saul's authority was fully established; and though the Lord was displeased with him, and purposed to set aside his family, yet he gave him success in the wars which he engaged in with several nations which oppressed Israel. Though his reign was in general prosperous, he was unable to subdue the Philistines, having missed the opportunity which God had offered him.

Q. What act of disobedience decided the fate of Saul, and excluded his family from the throne?

A. Samuel was sent to him, with a special message from God, to march against and utterly destroy the Amalekites. The Amalekites had been condemned to total destruction by God a long time before this; but the nation had been spared until it had filled up the measure of its iniquity. Now it had become so completely depraved, that a righteous and holy God determined to sweep it from the face of the earth, and Saul was commissioned as the instrument of his vengeance. But, instead of utterly destroying the nation, he spared Agag, their king, probably to grace his triumph; and the people were permitted to retain the choicest of the spoil for their

selves, while they destroyed the inhabitants without mercy.

Q. What excuse did Saul make to Samuel for saving the spoil of the enemy?

A. He pretended that the people had saved the spoil as an offering to the Lord. Samuel replied that God had more delight in obedience than in thousands of burnt-offerings; and that for this act of rebellion, God would rend the kingdom from him, and give it to another who would prove more obedient.

Q. How did Saul behave upon receiving his final sentence?

A. He could no longer deny his offence, yet still persisted in transferring the blame to the people, forgetting that he was not afraid to enforce his own prohibitions, though he appeared to suppose he was unable to enforce God's commands. He seemed also more fearful of Samuel's anger than the Lord's, and begged him to pardon his sin, as if he possessed authority to reverse the sentence God had denounced. Saul also entreated Samuel to remain with him, while he offered the customary sacrifices to honor him before the elders of Israel: Samuel, after much entreaty, remained.

Q. What became of Agag?

A. Samuel commanded the royal captive to be brought before him, and, after severely rebuking him for his tyranny and thirst of blood, ordered him to be slain.

Q. Was not that a wicked action in Samuel?

A. The laws of honor as well as humanity, forbid slaying a captive; but Agag was no better than a leader of banditti, who had been condemned to die by the great King of the universe: it was not therefore lawful to spare him, and Samuel, as God's servant, was bound to execute the sentence which Saul had evaded.

Q. Did Samuel continue with Saul after this transaction?

A. No: he withdrew entirely from court; yet he mourned for Saul daily, until he was reproved by his Maker, and commanded to go to the house of Jesse of Bethlehem, and anoint a new king over Israel. [B. C. 1067.]

Q. What passed at this ceremony?

A. Though Samuel continued to mourn over Saul, he beheld Samuel with a jealous eye. The prophet therefore enquired of God, how he could anoint a successor, without endangering his own life. God commanded him to take an heifer, and go to Bethlehem, on pretence of merely offering a sacrifice, and, while there, to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, as their future king.

Q. How did the elders of Bethlehem receive Samuel?

A. They were alarmed at his approach, fearing he was about to denounce some heavy judgment from God for their sins; but Samuel assured them that, on the contrary, he had come to unite with them in sacrifice, and to keep a feast to the Lord. In the mean time he informed Jesse of the whole purport of his visit, and commanded him to present his sons before the Lord, that he might anoint Saul's successor from among them.

Q. Which of Jesse's sons was the destined king?

A. Jesse first caused his eldest son to pass before Samuel. When the prophet beheld his majestic deportment, and uncommon beauty, he said surely this is the Lord's anointed. But God informed Samuel, that he regarded not the beauty of the person, but the excellence of the heart, and that this was not his chosen servant. Samuel did not fully understand that God gave Israel their first king in anger, a man after their own desire, beautiful in person, proud, ambitious, and warlike, but destitute of the grace of God; and that now he intended to give them a king in mercy, who should excel in strong faith, active piety, and benevolence towards his fellow-creatures. Samuel then desired Jesse to shew him all his sons. Jesse commanded five other of his sons to pass before Samuel. When the prophet saw that they were no way inferior to their elder brother in comeliness of person, he enquired of God which of them he had chosen for their king. And when Samuel found God had rejected them all, he enquired of Jesse if he had yet another son. Jesse replied that he had one, who was very young, a shepherd, who took care of the flocks. Samuel desired to have him called immediately, for he would not sit down to the feast until he had seen him.

Q. Did this youth prove to be the person chosen of God?

A. When David (for that was the name of the young shepherd) appeared before the prophet, God commanded him to anoint him king over Israel, which ceremony appears to have been performed in the presence of his brethren, though it was kept secret from the rest of his countrymen.

Q. Did not his brethren attempt to oppose his election?

A. They did not attempt to set aside God's appointment, though they were not free from envy and jealousy; neither did David consider himself as king, but only pointed out as Saul's successor. From this time he was evidently endued with a spirit of wisdom from God; which in proportion departed from Saul, and he became incapable of public busi-

ness, and at times fell into such fits of melancholy depression, as almost deprived him of reason.

Q. What method did his courtiers propose to drive away these fits of despair?

A. They proposed to procure a person eminently skilled in playing upon the harp; suggesting that the evil demon, which God permitted to trouble him, would be charmed away by the strains of sweet music.

Q. Was Saul pleased with this proposal?

A. He commanded that a person well skilled in music should be sought after immediately: One of his servants mentioned David, the son of Jesse, who was comely in person, very skilful in playing the harp, and a composer of sacred hymns, who, though but a mere youth, had already distinguished himself in the field of battle, and by wisdom in the ordinary concerns of life. This account of David pleased the king, who sent to Jesse, desiring that David might be taken from the sheepfold, and sent to wait on him.

Q. Did Jesse comply with the king's request?

A. Jesse prepared a present, and sent it by the hand of David. Saul beheld the youth with admiration and love, which was increased upon further acquaintance. He conferred upon him the office of armour-bearer. David's skill in music succeeded beyond expectation; he soothed the irritated mind of Saul; the demon departed, and he regained his former cheerfulness. David, being no longer wanted, returned with perfect contentment to the care of his flocks, and was soon forgotten at court. The hand of the Lord was manifest in this transaction in bringing David into notice, and shewing the people his talents and self command.

Q. How long was David confined to the obscurity of a shepherd's life?

A. It is uncertain; but probably two or three years elapsed, during which time Saul appears to have retained his cheerfulness and vigour; for we find him at the head of the army collected to oppose the Philistines, who had invaded Israel with a mighty force.

Q. In what manner was David introduced to public notice during the war?

A. While the two armies lay encamped on opposite hills, with the valley of Elah between them, a mighty warrior, whose height was upward of ten feet, and the weight of whose armour shewed that his bulk and strength were proportioned to his height, advanced with threatening gestures to challenge any individual of the Israelites, to decide by

single combat, which nation should now rule, and which obey. This challenge, with contemptuous defiance of Israel, the giant Goliath repeated during forty days. Such was the despondency of Saul and his army, that no one had courage, by their own prowess, or by a general assault upon the Philistines, to silence this proud blasphemous boaster, till David, who had been sent by his father with a present to his brethren, accepted the challenge.

Q. What motives induced David to accept Goliath's challenge?

A. When he entered the camp to enquire after his brethren's welfare, Goliath came forth with his daily menace, and the army of Saul, which was drawn forth for battle, fled before him. David enquired the cause of this terror, and was informed, that the king had promised his daughter to any person who would slay the giant, and wipe away the disgrace from Israel. David, filled with zeal for the cause of God, immediately accepted the challenge, though his elder brother Eliab, by unjust and envious insinuations, endeavored to prevent him.

Q. What reply did David make to his brother's unjust aspersions?

A. He took no notice of the reproaches cast upon his character, nor of the false reason his brothers assigned for his coming into the army, but merely replied, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? Should not every Israelite feel an holy indignation at hearing Israel and the God of Israel defied, and should not some one venture his life upon this occasion?

Q. Did Saul permit a youth like David to venture his life against so dreaded a foe?

A. Saul was unwilling to permit him to engage, until David informed him, that he had, in defence of his flock, slain both a lion and a bear, and the same God who had given him the victory over these wild beasts of the wilderness, would give this savage heathen into his hands. Saul's reluctance and fear were dissipated by the faith and courage of David, and he consented that the young shepherd should go forth the champion of Israel.

Q. Will you relate the circumstances of the combat?

A. Saul caused David to be equipped with a brazen helmet and a coat of mail; but David had not been accustomed to such armour, and was not willing to go forth encumbered with it, and besought the king to permit him to use the means of defence to which he was accustomed. David accordingly chose five smooth stones from a brook, put them

into a shepherd's bag, and having a sling in his right hand, he went forth to meet Goliath. When the proud giant beheld a youth unarmed approach to fight him, he was enraged beyond measure; cursing him in the name of his god, he bade him advance that he might give his flesh to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air; but David replied, "thou comest to me with a sword, a spear and a shield, but I come in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied, and who will this day deliver thee into my hand, and I will cut off thy head, and the Lord will give thy carcase, and the carcasses of the Philistines, this day to the fowls of the air, and the wild beasts of the field, that the whole earth may know that there is no God to be compared to the God of Israel." Goliath enraged beyond endurance at these assertions, hastened forward to meet David, but before he could reach him, a stone from David's sling sunk into his forehead and felled him to the ground: David immediately sprung upon the fallen giant, drew Goliath's sword from its sheath and cut off his head.

Q. Did not the Philistines revenge the death of their champion?

A. When they saw Goliath fall, they fled from their camp in the utmost confusion, and the Israelites pursued them with prodigious slaughter to the very gates of Gath and Ebron.

Q. How was Saul pleased with David's heroism?

A. He appeared greatly pleased at first, and enquired of Abner the general of his army, who was the father of this brave youth; Abner could not inform him. When David approached the king and presented the head of Goliath, Saul enquired with evident marks of admiration who he was.—David with great modesty replied, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.

Q. How came Saul not to recollect David?

A. Kings, especially such as Saul, have so many new attendants that they forget their old acquaintance; the change of dress from a courtier to a shepherd, must have made a great alteration in David's appearance; some months, if not years, had intervened since he waited on the king. These circumstances united with Saul's disordered mind render his forgetfulness of David very natural?

Q. How did Jonathan the son of Saul feel towards this young rival?

A. The modesty, piety and faith of David, were so congenial to the character of Jonathan, that they attracted his

most cordial esteem and affection. David returned the disinterested love of Jonathan, with a friendship equally ardent, and from this time to the day of their death, no jealousy interrupted their mutual regard; this was most honourable for Jonathan, as he knew that David was anointed to be king and that he and his family were excluded.

Q. What first aroused Saul's jealousy against David?

A. Saul kept David at court and bestowed on him some high military station about his person. On their triumphant return to Jerusalem, after the defeat of the Philistines, the women, according to the customs of the times, came forth to meet the victorious army, with instruments of music, and singing an ode composed upon the occasion. The matrons sang, Saul hath slain his thousands; the virgins replied, David hath slain his ten thousands: when the king heard the greater praise bestowed upon David, his jealousy was roused; he no longer doubted but this was the man that was to supplant him in the kingdom.

Q. How did Saul conduct towards David, after he became jealous of his popularity?

A. From that time he regarded David with an envious eye and sought an opportunity to destroy him.

Q. What was the first attempt he made to take David's life?

A. When Saul gave way to his malevolence, God permitted the evil spirit again to trouble him, and David resumed his harp to sooth him; being under the influence of a supernatural agent, Saul behaved in some respects as the true prophets do when inspired by the holy spirit. But whether he assumed this appearance to cloke his attempt of murdering David, or whether Satan wrought upon him till he seemed to prophecy, is not certain; but whatever influence Satan had upon his mind, he acted from deliberate malice, for while David was playing to relieve his melancholy, he attempted to kill him with a javelin, which he held in his hand, in place of a sceptre. Twice the envious monarch cast the well aimed javelin at the innocent youth, and twice by the favor of Heaven, he avoided the meditated blow: the deliverance was so extraordinary as to overwhelm the guilty king with fear, but not to produce submission to the disposal of Providence. Saul, to conceal the fear he entertained for David and to lessen the disadvantage of daily contrast with him, gave him command over a distant department of his army.

Q. How did David behave in this new station?

A. He conducted with so much valour and prudence as to

gain the love, not only of the troops immediately under his command, but of all Israel and Judah.

Q. How did Saul support David's increased popularity?

A. His hatred increased with David's fame, but he feared to put him to death, lest he should occasion a revolt among the people. The king's eldest daughter had been promised as a reward to the champion who should slay Goliath, but the promise had not been fulfilled to David: Saul now renewed the engagement, on condition of his making uncommon exertions to destroy the Lord's enemies; he was prompted by malice to make this proposal, in hopes David would fall in battle. David did not appear very solicitous of the honour of Saul's alliance, yet he did not refuse the stipulated conditions. When he had by his valour deserved the promised reward, Saul affronted him in the grossest manner by giving his daughter to another.

Q. Did not these repeated insults and injuries arouse David's resentment?

A. However deeply he felt these indignities, he expressed no resentment, but, on the contrary, when Saul proposed to give him his second daughter Michal in marriage, he waved the dignity on account of his own inferiority, without glancing at the king's former perfidy.

Q. What answer did Saul return to David's modest refusal?

A. He replied that he did not look for wealth or rank in his son-in-law, but valour and wisdom; that all the dowry he required was an hundred heads of the Philistines, that he might be avenged upon his enemies, hoping that David might fall by their hand.

Q. How was David pleased with this proposal?

A. David accepted the king's offer. As an active war subsisted at that time between Israel and the Philistines, David soon found an opportunity of slaying in battle, twice the stipulated number of the king's enemies, and obtained the hand of Michal.

Q. Was Saul pleased that David should be his son-in-law?

A. His fear and hatred were increased, by this alliance: he knew that Michal was ardently attached to David, and the very dangers to which he had exposed him, to obtain her hand, had increased his reputation. His hatred and fear were redoubled, by the valour and prudence displayed by David, in another formidable incursion of the Philistines; forgetful of consequences, he commanded Jonathan and his servants to kill him.

Q. Did not Jonathan take measures to preserve the life of his friend ?

A. Jonathan brought such forcible arguments to convince Saul of David's fidelity and worth, that he for a time dismissed his jealousy and admitted David again to favor.

Q. Could David dismiss his fear and repose full confidence in Saul ?

A. It is not probable that David could feel entire confidence in Saul's assurances of friendship, yet trusting in God's protection, he did not shun the perils annexed to his situation ; though he knew that his military reputation was the cause of Saul's envy, he did not neglect his post in the day of battle, but by new acts of valour added to his former fame and Saul's inquietude ; neither did he neglect to play the harp before Saul, when the evil spirit troubled him, though he saw the javelin in his hand which he had before so narrowly escaped.

Q. Did Saul again attempt to slay David with his own hand ?

A. Yes, he cast his javelin at him with such force that it passed into the wall, but David avoided the blow, and escaped to his own house. Saul set watchmen around David's house to slay him in the morning : Michal found means to effect his escape.

Q. In what manner did she effect it ?

A. She let him down from a window by a cord, and to prevent its immediate discovery made an image and laid it in her bed, pretending that her husband was sick, and by that means David had time to reach a place of safety. He penned the fifty-ninth Psalm at this time.

Q. Did Saul make any further attempts upon David's life at this time ?

A. When he was informed that David was sick, he ordered him to be brought in his bed, that he might put him to death. This command exhibits the savage cruelty of Saul, who it seems could not be satisfied with the death of his faithful servant, unless he had the satisfaction of slaying him with his own hands.

Q. Was Michal's conduct proper upon this occasion ?

A. Her attachment to her husband was commendable ; her stratagem to gain time until David should be at a distance, was allowable ; but, in the course of this transaction, she told several direct falsehoods, for which she had not even the plea of necessity. A dread of the tyrannical temper of

her father, forms the only apology; but even that cannot atone for the lie.

Q. Where did David fly for protection?

A. He fled to Ramah, to the aged prophet Samuel, and acquainted him with all that had befallen him. Samuel took David with him to Naioth near Ramah, where it is supposed the seminary of the prophets was placed, and on that account it was held sacred.

Q. Was Saul made acquainted with the place of David's retreat?

A. A king never wants for informers: Saul soon learnt where he was, and sent soldiers to take him: when they came to Naioth, and saw the venerable company of prophets prophesying, they became partakers of the divine spirit, and began to prophesy. When Saul was made acquainted with this wonderful event, he sent another band of soldiers to apprehend David, who were seized in the same manner as the first; the king, determined not to be defeated in his purpose, sent a third company, which prophesying also, Saul's wrath was kindled at these repeated disappointments, and he went to Naioth in great haste himself, determined to take David; but, before he reached the confines of Naioth, he too was seized with the spirit of prophesy. Saul's mind became so disordered, he was under such vehement agitation of spirits, that he cast off his garments, and lay on the ground all that day and night, in the presence of Samuel and David. This extraordinary sight made every one exclaim, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Q. What are we to understand by the spirit of inspiration given to Saul and his servants?

A. It was a miraculous display of divine power to preserve his faithful servants from destruction; but no proof, that either Saul or his servants were good men; the wild and violent agitations of Saul seem to have been no other than demoniacal. That same demon, which was permitted to haunt him since he was forsaken of God, and which always disappeared before the sacred music of David, was now in a judicial way brought upon him to save the life of David, and expose Saul to contempt and derision; such violent and wild agitations are never mentioned of true prophets when under the inspiration of God's spirit.

Q. Was Jonathan acquainted with Saul's designs against David?

A. He was not: but while Saul was detained at Naioth, David repaired hastily to Jonathan, to confer with him upon

the state of his affairs. Jonathan could not believe that his father had so soon forgotten the solemn oath he had taken not to destroy David, and attributed his late attempts rather to his distempered mind, than any fixed purpose to slay his friend; but David assured him that his fears were well founded, which laid him under the necessity of quitting Saul's service forever; he conjured Jonathan by the sacred bond of friendship that subsisted between them, to form some plan for his preservation, or, if he judged him worthy of death, to slay him with his own hands.

Q. What effect did the conclusion of David's speech produce upon the affectionate heart of Jonathan?

A. His feelings were deeply wounded by David's implied suspicions, and he promised to do whatever he required of him; at this interview, these rival friends renewed the sacred compact between them. Jonathan engaged, on his part, to discover his father's real intentions towards David, but required in his turn, that David should swear to protect himself and his children, when the Lord should give him the throne of his father Saul.

Q. Was it proper for Jonathan to make a covenant with David, when he knew he was to supplant his father on the throne?

A. The kingdom of Israel had not as yet become hereditary; God, who was the king and governor of his people, disposed of the crown by direct appointment. Jonathan knew that it was God's purpose to set aside his own family for David's; his heart being not only magnanimous but holy, he never attempted to counteract God's decrees, but, on the contrary, did full justice to the merits of his rival, entertaining for him the most ardent and generous friendship; without deserting from his duty as a son, he took every lawful method to preserve the life of David.

Q. What method did he suggest at this time?

A. It was agreed between the two friends, that David should conceal himself, in a certain field, during the feast of the new moon, which was to begin on the next day, and that if Saul enquired, why he was absent, Jonathan should reply, that he had given him permission to make a visit to his father's family in Bethlehem. If the king shewed great anger at his absence, Jonathan would know David's suspicions were well founded; but, if he discovered no marks of displeasure, Jonathan would have an opportunity of reconciling him once more to his friend. In case Jonathan could not speak to David, they agreed upon a signal that would discov-

er Saul's intentions, without betraying David's place of concealment.

Q. What was to be the signal ?

A. Jonathan engaged to repair to the place appointed for David's concealment, attended only by a single servant, "And if I find," said he, "my father well disposed toward thee, I will shoot three arrows at a mark and bid the young man gather up the arrows and bring them to me, for they are before him, know thou that no mischief is intended thee by my father ; but, if I say to the lad, behold, the arrows are beyond thee, then escape for thy life, for the Lord hath sent thee away." Then assuring David in the name of the Lord that he would be ever mindful of their vow of fidelity, the two friends took an affectionate leave.

Q. How could David suppose that Saul would expect him at that feast after his repeated attempts to kill him ?

A. Saul supposed his designs were not known to David, and when he perceived his place empty on the first day of the feast, he made no remarks upon it, supposing that accident had detained him from the duties of religion. But when, on the second day, he perceived his place was still vacant, he enquired why the son of Jesse was absent. Jonathan informed him that David had requested to be excused from appearing at the king's table, that he might keep the feast with his father's family in Bethlehem.

Q. Was not that excuse a falsehood ?

A. It appears that David actually went to Bethlehem, but that he returned on the eve of the third day, to the place appointed by Jonathan.

Q. Was Saul angry when he found David was not coming to the feast ?

A. His disappointment and rage knew no bounds ; he abused Jonathan in the most scurrilous terms the language afforded ; accused him of conspiring with the son of Jesse against him, and when Jonathan endeavored by mild expostulations to appease his father's wrath, he threw a javelin at him to take his life.

Q. How was Jonathan affected by his father's injurious treatment ?

A. His heart was filled with grief and rage ; he retired from the table to indulge his sorrow. The next morning he arose at the appointed time, to meet David in the field, and after shooting the arrows according to the signal between them, finding that he was not watched, he sent the lad into the city with his ammunition, and remained to have one more interview with his beloved and injured friend. In this interview,

Q

David shewed Jonathan all the respect due to his rank, his unblemished honor and disinterested friendship, expressing in the most glowing colours his gratitude and admiration of his friend, and the deep anguish he felt at being exiled from his country, separated from his wife and friends, excluded from the ordinances of God and the society of his people. Nothing can be conceived more affecting than the parting of these two friends, and it does not appear that they met but once more in this world.

Q. What place afforded David a retreat from Saul's revenge?

A. He went first to Nob to enquire of the high priest, and to take leave of him and the sanctuary, probably expecting to find a friend in Ahimelich. Ahimelich appeared suspicious of David, and enquired why he came alone; his cold reception proved a snare to David, and lest he should be betrayed to Saul or sent away without refreshment, he framed a gross falsehood, which cannot be excused, and which led to fatal consequences.

Q. What was the falsehood?

A. David told Ahimelich, that the king had sent him on secret and urgent business, and that his servants were at a small distance, but they were in want of refreshment. Ahimelich supposed in such an extreme case that they might eat of the shew bread, which had been prepared for the priests, provided they were ceremonially clean. David assured them they were not only ceremonially clean, but were men of moral lives. Ahimelich supplied him with bread for himself and followers. On David's asking him for a sword, he gave him the sword of Goliath.

Q. To what place fled David after this interview with Ahimelich?

A. Not wishing to take arms against Saul, and feeling himself unsafe in any city of Israel, he sought an asylum with Achish king of Gath. The king was favourably disposed toward him, but his courtiers remembered David's intrepid actions; a rumour seems also to have reached Gath that David had been anointed as future king of Israel; they therefore advised Achish to put him to death. David was informed of their suspicions, and to escape death, feigned himself a lunatic; this deceived the Philistine courtiers, and gave him an opportunity of escaping. On this occasion he composed the 54th and 56th psalms.

Q. In what place did he next seek shelter?

A. He retired to the cave of Adullam, which belonged to the tribe of Judah; while he was in this place, he informed

his father and his brethren of his retreat, and they repaired to him in the cave. Many others also fled to David, either from a love of change or from fear of Saul's encreasing tyranny, which gave him the command of a small force consisting of four hundred; but they acted entirely upon the defensive and indeed became protectors of their country.

Q. How was David's father and mother disposed of during his exile.

A. He placed them under the protection of the king of Moab, who being at variance with Saul, favoured the interest of David.

Q. How long did he remain with the king of Moab?

A. When he had secured an honourable retreat for his parents, David at the command of God, by the prophet Gad, returned again to his own country; he first repaired to the forest of Hareth, where he continued but a short time, and then removed to the wilderness of Ziph, where he received a considerable reinforcement of adherents.

Q. Where was king Saul at this time; had he made any attempt to discover David's retreat?

A. Saul had fixed his standard on an eminence near Gibeah; he seems to have been under constant apprehensions of an attack either from David or some other enemy, for he went always armed or kept a guard around his person. In this situation he received information that David, with a considerable force, lay encamped in the wilderness of Hareth. Being filled with rage and fear at the intelligence, he broke out into a most violent invective against his own tribe and the officers of his household, accusing them of uniting with Jonathan to destroy him and place David upon the throne.

Q. Did the officers of Saul attempt to vindicate their conduct?

A. They all remained silent except Doeg the Edomite, who informed Saul that he met David at the city of Nob, where he asked council of Ahimelich the high priest, who gave refreshments for him and his followers, with the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Doeg by this artful and slanderous statement, in which he concealed the principal fact (the imposition David passed upon Ahimelich) occasioned the death of the high priest and all his family.

Q. Will you relate the manner of their execution?

A. Saul, on Doeg's information, sent immediately for Ahimelich and all his family. Ahimelich obeyed the king's summons without hesitation. This ready attendance would

have convinced a mind less prejudiced than that of Saul's, of his innocence. But neither this proof nor the candid statement he made of his own conduct, had any weight with the vindictive monarch of Israel. He commanded his servants to slay, not only Ahimelich, but all the Lord's priests. But his guards, convinced of the innocence of the priests, and fearing God more than the wrath of the King, expressly refused to execute his cruel command. The king then ordered Doeg to perform his bloody commission. The vile Edomite readily obeyed the command, and slew with his own hand eighty-five priests of the Lord. Not content with this horrid massacre, Doeg, doubtless by Saul's authority, destroyed the city of Nob, and slew not only the women and children, but the cattle, with the sword.

Q. What could have induced Saul to commit such an impolitic act of cruelty?

A. David's piety was so conspicuous, Saul thought the priests would favor his cause. By this act of severity he intended to intimidate all the Israelites from showing the least favor to him. He seems also to have been actuated by a spirit of malignant hatred against God, and to aim at revenge upon his Maker, by destroying his servants. Thus Saul, who formerly hesitated to destroy the Amalekites, the professed enemies of God and his people, did not hesitate to slay all the Lord's anointed. By this horrible massacre was fulfilled the prophecy denounced against the house of Eli, for the sins of Hophni and Phinehas.

Q. Was there no one of the family of Eli remaining?

A. Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelich, escaped the slaughter and fled to David for protection. When Abiathar had informed him of the melancholy event, David feelingly expressed his sympathy for the sufferers and his anguish at having occasioned the death of so many innocent and useful persons. He acknowledged that upon recollection he had feared some ill consequences would follow from the known malignity of Doeg. He endeavoured to sooth the wounded spirit of Abiathar, by expressing his sorrow for the losses he had sustained and by promises to protect his life at the hazard of his own.

Q. What was the next memorable event in David's life?

A. He was informed that the Philistines had sent out a foraging party to rob the city of Keilah; David enquired of the Lord whether he should go to the relief of the city. Having received a command to go, he pursued after the Philistines and recovered the spoil. Saul being informed that David was in Keilah, thought the slight circumstance of his

entering a fenced city, an evidence that God had forsaken him: he prepared to attack the city without delay. David received information of Saul's preparations, and fearing that the inhabitants of Keilah, dreading the power and cruel vengeance of Saul, might be induced to give him into his hands, enquired of God, by Abiathar the priest, if the citizens of Keilah would prove treacherous, and being informed that they would, he left the city and secured himself in a strong hold in the wilderness of Ziph.

Q. What befel David while he lay encamped in the wilderness?

A. Jonathan made him a visit, and encouraged him to trust in God, who would never forsake him. After enjoying for some hours the sweets of mutual confidence and friendship, and again renewing their vows of fidelity, they parted never more to meet in this lower world.

Q. Did Saul pursue after David in the wilderness?

A. The Israelites were in general averse to Saul's persecution of David, and unwilling to give any information or assistance. But the Ziphites acquainted Saul with David's place of concealment. When Saul's army had nearly surrounded David's little company, he was called off to defend himself against the Philistines, who had made a formidable attack upon the country; thus were these barbarians made an instrument in the hand of God to deliver his servant.— David named the place *the rock of division*, as separating betwixt him and Saul. He next retired to strong holds at Engedi.

Q. To what danger was he exposed at Engedi?

A. When Saul had repelled the Philistines, he resumed his pursuit of David. With a select body of three thousand men, he entered the forest, which was uncultivated and rocky, inhabited only by wild goats. Saul supposing David to be at a distance, retired into a cave for repose, without even a single attendant. But in this very cave David and his few followers lay concealed. When David's followers saw their enemy in their power, they urged him to take Saul's life. Reminding him of the promise God had made of delivering his enemy into his hand, they besought him not to let this opportunity escape.

Q. Had this plausible reasoning any effect on the mind of David?

A. David knew that he had the promise of the kingdom, but no command to slay the reigning king, who had been raised up by God to govern his people. It is true Saul had been rejected, and had greatly injured David, but he

had no right to avenge himself. But as a proof of his loyalty, he cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, and so delicate was his sense of a subject's duty, his heart smote him least in this action he had failed in due respect to the Lord's anointed.

Q. Was Saul made acquainted with his danger?

A. When Saul had left the cave, David followed him and cried, my Lord the king. When Saul turned to look upon David, he bowed to the earth according to the custom of saluting princes; then in a most pathetic and forcible address he expostulated with Saul on his unjust suspicions, showing unequivocal proofs of his innocence by the mutilated robe which he held in his hand. He assured him by the tender appellation of father, that he would never injure him. He intimated that Saul's jealousy arose from slanderous reports. He mildly expostulated on the injustice and irrationality of his conduct. At the same time warned him that God would judge between them, and avenge his cause if he continued to persecute him.

Q. What effect had the generous conduct of David upon Saul?

A. David's affecting address, joined to the unequivocal proof of moderation which he held in his hand, melted the jealous monarch into tears and obliged him to acknowledge that his son's superior virtue rendered him worthy the throne of Israel. In consequence of his present conviction, he desired David to take an oath, that he would never revenge the injuries he had received, upon the house of Saul, but when seated on the throne of Israel, would show the same kindness to his posterity as he had now shewn to their father. David readily gave Saul the security of an oath, but did not require Saul to swear in return not to take his life, knowing how little he regarded his own protestation. After mutual embraces, the king returned to Gibeah, but David remained in the wilderness.

Q. What memorable event is next recorded in the history of Israel?

A. The death of Samuel the prophet. His administration of justice for the space of twenty-three years, was marked with such strict integrity, that on his making a solemn appeal to the people, no man could accuse him of one venial or injudicious action. After his resignation of the government, he continued to act in the capacity of a prophet.—It is supposed that he presided over the seminary of the prophets to the time of his death, which happened B. C. 1061. The Israelites were sensible of the loss of so wor-

thy a character and of their folly in rejecting him as their ruler. His remains were interred amid universal lamentations in his own estate at Ramah.

Q. What moral lesson are we taught by the history of Samuel?

A. We are taught to estimate the character of a pious ruler as an inestimable blessing, though he may be destitute of those external graces of person and political sagacity which constitute the dazzling but unsubstantial glory of the warrior. We are also taught the duty of a truly good and great man lies in rising above revenge for ingratitude and injury, and that he will continue to labour for the interests of his country and religion, though unjustly removed from a public to a private station.

Q. What became of David after the death of Samuel?

A. He retired to the wilderness of Paran: this was a part of that wilderness, in which the Israelites wandered forty years. It lay near mount Carmel, belonging to the tribe of Judah. In this neighbourhood lived Nabal, a man of large possessions, whose flocks were kept on the borders of the wilderness where David had retired. In this situation, they were not only exposed to be destroyed by David's army, who were in extreme want, but by the neighbouring Canaanites. David not only restrained his men from molesting Nabal's flocks, but protected them against the depredations of other invaders. In return for his services, he sent a few of his servants and modestly requested Nabal to give him whatever came to hand in a season of festivity, which he then held at Carmel.

Q. What answer did Nabal return to the messengers of David?

A. Nabal being naturally of a churlish and covetous disposition, not only overlooked the obligation he owed to David for protecting his shepherds from their enemies, but what was due to a man who had often saved his country in the hour of danger, and was unjustly persecuted by Saul. He returned so insolent an answer to David's request, that in the first moment of anger, he threatened to extirpate Nabal's whole family.

Q. How came David to depart from that moderation of character which he had hitherto preserved?

A. David had watched against anger and revenge towards his principal enemy, but the insolence of Nabal was unexpected and threw him off his guard. It was also more humiliating to be insulted by such a character, than to be persecuted by a king. But it does not excuse his sinful anger.

and his meditated revenge. And he had reason to cry out as he did in an hour of repentance, "deliver me from blood guiltiness, O Lord!"

Q. What prevented him from executing his bloody purpose?

A. One of the servants acquainted Abigail the wife of Nabal, with the ill usage David had received from his master, and of the obligations they were under, and expressed his fear that he would not fail to revenge the insult he had received, by the destruction of the family. Abigail, who was a woman of spirit and discernment, perceived the danger, and repaired immediately in person to David's retreat with an ample supply of provisions. She made a handsome apology for her husband; expressed a firm belief that David would be established in the kingdom; made honourable mention of the services he had done to Israel; intimated that it would be honourable to his character and more consoling to his mind, to forgive the injury he had received, than by avenging himself, to shed innocent blood. Her persuasive eloquence restored David to his proper frame of mind, and he expressed his gratitude to her and thankfulness to God, for preventing him from committing evil by avenging his own wrongs.

Q. Did Abigail acquaint Nabal with his danger?

A. When Nabal recovered his senses, his wife told him to what imminent danger he had, by his folly, exposed his family. This information so agitated him, that he fell into a fever, of which he died in ten days. After his death, David espoused Abigail, with whose modesty and discretion he had been greatly charmed. Saul had previously given Michal to another, shewing by this act, that his tyranny was exerted over his own family as well as over his subjects.

Q. Did Saul make another attempt to take the life of David?

A. After the promises he made at Engedi, Saul desisted from his pursuit of David; but he was again excited against him by the officious Ziphites, who informed Saul that David concealed himself in a strong hold in their country, and that they were ready and able to deliver him into the hands of the king. When he received this information, envy, malice and ambition revived in his heart, and he determined to make one more effort to destroy his rival.

Q. How was David preserved from the malice of Saul?

A. When David heard that Saul was actually come to destroy him, at the head of three thousand chosen troops, he

neither fled at his approach, as distrustful of the care of Providence, nor endeavored to defend his rightful cause by the force of arms, which he undoubtedly would have done, had it been the Philistines, and not his own sovereign and countrymen, who were bent upon his destruction. He sent spies to learn the place of Saul's encampment, by whom he learnt, that he was encamped on the hill at Hachilah: he took Abishai, his sister's son, and penetrated the camp even to the tent of Saul, from whose bed he took the king's spear and a cruise of water and returned unperceived; the guards and the whole army being in a profound sleep.

Q. Did not Abishai propose to kill the sleeping monarch?

A. He urged David to permit him to slay him, but David refused, saying, no one can stretch forth his hand against a king anointed by God, and be guiltless; but the Almighty, who gave him dominion, would inflict punishment upon him in his own time and manner. With this remonstrance David, with difficulty, restrained Abishai from destroying Saul.

Q. Did David acquaint Saul with what had passed?

A. When David had reached a place of safety, he called aloud to Saul's soldiers and to Abner their commander, and upbraided him with neglect of his master's safety; at the same time, commanded him to produce the king's spear and cruise of water which stood at his pillow; he demanded, who was the king's friend, those in whom he trusted and who through negligence had left him exposed to the enemy, or himself, who had restrained the hand that was lifted up to smite his sovereign?

Q. Had this second act of forbearance any influence to soften Saul's heart?

A. Saul was overwhelmed with confusion; he acknowledged himself a second time indebted for the preservation of his life to his injured son-in-law: He broke up his encampment, and, after many assurances of friendship to David, bestowing many blessings upon him and prognosticating his future greatness and prosperity, he departed to his own palace, but David remained still in the wilderness.

Q. Did he remain there long?

A. No, he again fled to Achish, king of Gath, for protection.

Q. Was this a proper place of retreat?

A. It was not; his residence among the Philistines was calculated to alienate the affections of his followers from their own country and religion. It gave his enemies occasion for uttering slanderous reports against his character and princ-

ples ; and it laid David under obligations to those whom he could never favour, without betraying the cause of God.

Q. What induced him to take so rash a measure ?

A. David, by reflecting upon the inveterate malice of Saul, the neglect and treachery of his countrymen, seems to have forgotten his anointing, the promise and command of God, and the repeated and extraordinary deliverances he had experienced ; and despaired of safety in the land of Judah.— Having probably received a promise from Achish, he went thither without consulting the Lord, and took with him his family and followers.

Q. How did Achish treat David during his residence in his kingdom ?

A. With the utmost hospitality and kindness. David requested the king to assign him a place of residence, that he might not be an incumbrance in the royal city ; and Achish gave him the village of Ziklag, which formerly belonged to Judah, but had been conquered by the Philistines, but from this time came into the possession of Israel.

Q. How was David employed while he resided amongst the Philistines ?

A. During his residence at Ziklag, he was reinforced by some of Saul's relations, and many valiant men of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, with whom he made several incursions into the territories of the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and Amalekites, which lay upon the west border of Judah. He entirely destroyed those nations, and divided the property among his followers, except a part of the spoil, which he sent as a present to Achish.

Q. Did Achish know that David had made war upon these nations ?

A. When he enquired of David where he had been, David answered in such equivocal terms, as induced Achish to believe he had been fighting against his own countrymen. Intelligence was not then conveyed so easily as at present ; Achish therefore remained ignorant of the exact truth, and concluded that David was now so entirely detached from the interest of his own country that he should retain him forever in his service.

Q. What apology can be made for David's entirely destroying the nations with whom he fought, and for using duplicity toward Achish ?

A. The nations he destroyed belonged to the devoted Canaanites, whom God had commanded his people to extirpate. We should not censure the severity with which David con-

ducted the war, as he only finished the work of vengeance which Saul had begun, by the express command of Him who only has a right to destroy. The situation of David tempted him to use deceit, and though he did not actually make use of falsehood, as the nations he destroyed lay on the south side of Judah, yet his conduct upon this occasion cannot be justified.

Q. Was David's duplicity of any real advantage to him ?

A. His compliance to Achish gained him the confidence of that prince so fully, that he required the assistance of David in a war which the Philistines had declared against Saul.—Had not his design been overruled by the lords of the Philistines, who still remembered his former valour, he must either have proved treacherous to his benefactor or fought against Israel, by which he would have committed a great sin, alienated the affections of his people and exposed himself to the reproach of having murdered Saul. Thus his disingenuity, which sprung either from fear or flattery, brought him into a situation of difficulty and danger, from which he could not have been extricated by human wisdom.

Q. Did the jealousy of the Philistine lords raise any suspicions in the mind of Achish ?

A. No : he called David into his presence and acquainted him with the jealousy entertained against him by the princes ; desired him to return to Ziklag and guard the territories of Gath during his absence : at the same time he expressed the warmest attachment to David, and confidence in his friendship and integrity. The commendations of Achish would have been honorable to David had they not been in part the effect of deception.

Q. What punishment was inflicted on David for his sins at this time ?

A. When David marched to the assistance of Achish he left Ziklag defenceless. The Amalekites took this opportunity to revenge the late depredations on their country. After plundering several cities, they took Ziklag and burnt it, but did not destroy the prisoners, preferring the profit of enslaving them to the pleasure of revenge. God by this dispensation intended to rebuke David, but not to destroy his family.

Q. What were the feelings of David and his followers when they returned to their desolated village ?

A. David and his company, when they found Ziklag laid waste, and their wives and children destroyed or led into captivity, rent their clothes and made great lamentations for

their friends. David's anguish was increased by the injustice of his followers, who, in the agony of their minds, accused him as the author of their calamity, and threatened to stone him.

Q. How was David supported under this complicated scene of distress ?

A. In the midst of these multiplied troubles, his spirit was soon calmed and raised in humble confidence to God. He neither reproved his enraged followers nor murmured against Providence. But, relying on the promises of God to all believers, and in particular to him, he was encouraged to expect forgiveness, protection, and deliverance. He desired Abiathar, the high priest, to enquire of the Lord whether he should pursue after the enemy who had plundered Ziklag.

Q. What answer was given ?

A. The Lord commanded that he should pursue after the enemy, for he should surely overtake them, and rescue not only the captives, but recover the spoil. This answer encouraged the soldiers. They immediately commenced the pursuit ; on their march, they found an Egyptian slave who had been left behind on account of sickness and who was almost famished for want of sustenance. After they had restored him by proper refreshments he informed them who the plunderers of Ziklag were, and what course they had taken.—David made use of this slave as a guide to discover the Amalekites. He overtook them while they were feasting upon their plunder, entirely unprepared for defence, and obtained an easy victory ; none escaping except four hundred young men, who were indebted for their safety to the fleetness of their dromedaries.

Q. What proposal did some of David's followers make for the distribution of the spoil ?

A. They proposed that the two husbandmen who had been left behind on account of their fatigue, to guard the baggage, should not share in the spoil they had recovered ; but should be content with having their wives and children restored. But David would not permit this injustice. He mildly reproved them for their covetous desires, reminding them that it was not by their own valour, but by the assistance of Heaven, that they had been enabled to overtake and defeat the enemy ; and from this time he made it a law in Israel, that those who staid to guard the camp should share equally with those who went forth to battle.

Q. What use did David make of the part of the spoil which fell to his share ?

A. He sent it as a present to those persons who had at any

time protected him from the power of Saul. This action might have proceeded from genuine benevolence and gratitude, and it might have arisen from policy, for it served to remind his friends of his existence, and to make them more active in his favor.

Q. Where was Saul during these transactions?

A. When Saul heard that the Philistines had invaded his kingdom, he marched his forces to meet them. The Philistines were encamped on a plain near the city of Shunem, and Saul pitched his tent on the hill of Gilboa. When Saul viewed the host of the Philistines he was greatly troubled, because it appeared much superior to his own. He enquired of the Lord concerning the fate of the battle. But the Lord did not vouchsafe an answer. This silence proclaimed his heavy displeasure; and Saul ought more deeply to have humbled himself; and to have persevered in his supplications. But instead of waiting on God for an answer, he went in disguise to En-dor and prevailed upon a woman who had a familiar spirit, to raise up Samuel.

Q. How came Saul to apply to this woman, after he had banished all persons who dealt in these diabolical arts from the country?

A. Nothing could exceed the presumption of consulting an evil spirit to reveal to him what the spirit of God concealed. But it shews to what infatuation sin leads its votaries. Saul first neglected to obey the commands of God; he next slew the priests of the Lord for a slight offence; and now had recourse to an evil spirit to bring Samuel from the regions of the dead, that in defiance of God, he might receive counsel and encouragement from him, as he had often experienced during his existence on earth.

Q. Would God allow the incantations of a detestable woman to have power over a glorified saint?

A. A great mystery rests upon this part of scripture; but whoever it was that appeared to Saul, if Samuel or an evil spirit, assuming his form, it was done by the Lord's special permission, and not through any art the woman possessed; for when she saw the form appear she was exceedingly terrified, which proves the appearance was new and unexpected to her. Though the woman's incantation was not the cause of Samuel's appearance, Saul's obstinacy in seeking to know his destiny, might be the occasion: God, by shewing him his approaching doom, punished his audacity. Ancient writers understood the scripture in its simple statement: "and after his death he prophesied and shewed the king his end."

Q. How did Josephus, the great Jewish historian, understand the vision.

A. He relates the circumstances in the following manner: "As soon as the woman had engaged Saul by oath, to protect her from any harm, she called the soul of Samuel out of Hades. When he appeared, the woman was flung into great disorder; his divine form and venerable appearance astonished her. She immediately cried out, art not thou king Saul! for Samuel had informed her who he was.—Saul acknowledged he was the king, and asked her whence her disorder arose. She replied, that she saw a person ascend, who, in form was like a god; that he was an old man, clothed in a sacerdotal robe. The king knew by these signs that it was Samuel."

Q. What passed between Samuel and Saul?

A. The woman first saw the spirit of Samuel, but afterwards it became visible to Saul, and he bowed himself to the ground in token of reverence. Samuel then demanded of Saul, why he had sent for him and what was his request. Saul replied, I am in great distress; my enemies press heavily upon me on every side; God has forsaken me; he answers me no more either by prophets or by dreams. I have therefore called thee, who hast always directed me right, to tell me what I shall do.

Q. What answer did the spirit of Samuel make to Saul?

A. He informed him, that for disobedience to the commands of God, his kingdom was taken from him and given to David, and that on the morrow, he and his sons should be slain in battle.

Q. How was Saul affected by this fatal intelligence?

A. He fainted and fell down upon the floor; when, by the exertions of the woman and his attendants, he was recovered to life and sensation, she persuaded him to take some refreshment, which enabled him to return to the camp.

Q. Did not Saul attempt to elude his end by shunning the battle?

A. Saul, though terrified even to desperation, was not humbled. We do not learn that he offered any sacrifices, made any supplications to avert the vengeance of heaven, or even attempted an escape, but in sullen despair rushed on to his doom. Neither did he endeavor to save the lives of his sons, by detaining them from the battle: thus the way was cleared for David's ascension to the throne; for had Jonathan, Abinadab or Melchishua, Saul's eldest and be-

loved sons, been left alive, there would have been very great opposition to David's government.

Q. Give an account of the battle?

A. The battle began the next morning, and was fought with uncommon fury; but victory soon declared in favour of the Philistines, and Saul saw his three sons fall amid slaughtered heaps of their countrymen. Saul being grievously wounded, unable either to resist or flee, desired his armour bearer to put an end to his existence, that he might escape the insults of the Philistines. But his armour-bearer refused to raise his hand against the king, and Saul in mad despair became his own murderer; his armour-bearer, not fearing the wrath of God, as he feared the person of his earthly sovereign, followed his example. Thus despairing of God's mercy, or presuming too much upon it, to escape temporal sufferings and disgrace, they despised the gift of life, and by an act of rebellion against his authority, in proud defiance of his justice, with the guilt of all their unrepented crimes upon their heads, they rushed uncalled before his tribunal.

Q. What became of the body of king Saul?

A. The day after the battle, the Philistines found the body of Saul and his sons among the slain; they cut off Saul's head and sent it to be fastened in the temple of Dagon, and his armour in that of Ashtaroth, as a memorial of victory and in honour of their chief idols; they stripped the bodies of Saul's sons and fastened them to the walls of Bethshan, a city near the field of battle.

Q. Were their bodies suffered to remain in that ignominious situation?

A. No; the citizens of Jabesh-gilead remembered the protection they had received from Saul in the beginning of his reign: they sent a body of valiant men, who marched all night, attacked the city of Bethshan, recovered the bodies of their king and his sons, and returned in safety to Jabesh-gilead. They burned the bodies of Saul and his sons, and honorably interred their ashes; they fasted seven days in token of grief and humiliation under the divine rebuke. But there was no general lamentation made for Saul, as there had been for Samuel.

Q. Was it customary for the Israelites to burn their dead?

A. It was not; but there was no law against it, and probably they feared the Philistines would endeavor to retake from them the dead bodies of their princes, or they might have thought it more honourable than the common mode of interment.

Q. What consequences followed this defeat to Israel?

A. The inhabitants of the valley of Jezreel, and of the mountains of Gilboa, and those near the passage of Jordan, where the battle was fought, fled and left their habitations to the conquerors, who settled in them. These were the effects of rejecting the Lord and his prophets and demanding a king.

CHAP. VI.

From the death of Saul to the rebellion of Absalom.

Q. How was David made acquainted with the fate of Saul?

A. An Amalekite, discovered the body of Saul on the field of battle; he took the crown from his head and the bracelet from his arm and brought them to David, boasting at the same time that he slew the king of Israel at his own request, expecting by this act to gain the favor of David. But David ordered him to be slain for lifting his hand against the Lord's anointed, and as a warning to others not to expect any favour from him by destroying any of Saul's family.

Q. What lamentation did David make for Saul and his sons?

A. He fasted seven days with his followers; he also composed a pathetic elegy, as a tribute of respect to the memory of Saul, and of affection to that of Jonathan. The valor of Saul and Jonathan in defending their country and their falling in the same battle, are touched upon in a very poetical manner.

• The daughters of Israel are called upon to mourn for Saul, who by his encouragement to manufactories and commerce, had clothed them in purple. David mentioned every thing which was consistent with truth, in the praise of Saul, but Jonathan he lamented with the most passionate affection. [B. C. 1055.]

Q. What measures did David pursue to get possession of the vacant throne?

A. After the death of Saul, many Israelites resorted to David to Ziklag, which made his forces very considerable; yet he did not take any step to obtain the government without consulting the Lord; trusting in him, who had promised him the kingdom, to give it him in his own time and manner; that he might possess it with a clear conscience and avoid all charge of guilt, even from Saul's adherents.

God directed him to go to Hebron, where he was publicly anointed king over the tribe of Judah; but Abner, Saul's general, caused Ishbosheth, a son of Saul, to be proclaimed king at Mahanaim, a city which stood eastward of Jordan.

Q. Did David make any attempt to dispossess Ishbosheth of his part of the kingdom?

A. For two years, they both governed their respective partisans without opposition; but, at the end of that term, Abner, who possessed the authority (for Ishbosheth was only a nominal king,) made war upon David, expecting to reduce the whole kingdom to the power of Ishbosheth.

Q. What were the effects of this war?

A. For some time David acted only on the defensive, not willing to destroy the house of Saul, on account of his oath. But Abner finally provoked Joab to engage in battle, and for near six years there was constant war between the adherents of David and of Ishbosheth. David conducted in this civil war, with great moderation; his friends increased daily in numbers and strength, while those of Ishbosheth diminished.

Q. How was the war concluded?

A. Abner, who had placed Ishbosheth on the throne and supported him there by his own exertions, being reprimanded by him, resolved to throw off his allegiance and embrace the earliest opportunity of tendering his services to David. He convened the elders of Israel, reminded them that they had formerly desired to have David for their king, that he would oppose their wishes no longer, as God had promised to save Israel by his hand from the Philistines; the people readily agreed to obey him. Abner having obtained permission to convey Michal to her first husband, went to Hebron and was received with marks of distinction, and a league was formed between him and David.

Q. What befel Abner after making this engagement with David?

A. Joab, being informed of the interview between David and Abner, and fearing a powerful rival in that general, sent a message after him in David's name. When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab drew him aside on pretence of private business, and treacherously assassinated him, to revenge, he said, the death of his brother Asahel, whom Abner slew in battle; Abishai the brother of Joab, was also concerned in this base transaction.

Q. Was not Joab deprived of his office for this violation of public faith?

A. David expressed the most lively sorrow at this tragical

event; after uttering many imprecations against the murderer of Abner, he solemnized his funeral with all possible solemnity and respect. But he did not dare to punish Joab and his brother as their guilt merited. They had been very faithful and useful to him during his afflictions; they were his near kinsmen and very popular in the army. It is probable he was actuated partly by gratitude and affection to his nephew, and partly by fear of a revolt in the army. But he should have remembered that he was anointed king to administer justice without respect of persons; he might have been assured of the Lord's protection in so important a duty; the example would have been salutary and saved him from the imperious authority of Joab during the rest of his reign. A want of firmness was the great fault of David's character, and repeatedly drew him into acts of sin.

Q. But did not Abner deserve death?

A. While the conduct of Joab cannot be too severely reprobated, the wisdom of God is manifest in Abner's death. He had from ambition opposed the declared will of God, for he knew that the kingdom was given to David. It was not from a desire of obedience to the decrees of providence, but a mean revenge which induced him at last to desert Ishbosheth; he was therefore thrown aside as unworthy to give peace to Israel; and it is probable if he had lived, he would have been the instrument of much evil.

Q. What became of Ishbosheth after Abner's death?

A. Baanah and Rechab, two of his captains, murdered him while he was asleep, and carried his head to Hebron, in the expectation of receiving an ample reward. David expressed the utmost abhorrence of their treachery. He caused the head of the murdered king to be deposited in Abner's sepulchre, and the base regicides to be executed, their hands and feet hung up over the pool in Hebron, as a public testimony of his detestation of murder and revenge.

Q. Was there any opposition to David's government after the death of Ishbosheth?

A. After the death of Ishbosheth and Abner, the elders of the tribes of Israel, voluntarily assembled and anointed him king over all Israel; it is probable that David passed an act of indemnity for past offences, and engaged to rule over the people according to the law of God. At this time good rulers were first designated by the emblem of shepherds.

Q. What was the first war of David after he was anointed king over all Israel?

A. He laid siege to Jerusalem, which was still in possession

sion of the Jebusites. He took the lower city, but the fortress of Sion still held out against him. David knowing that rewards are excitements to great actions, promised to confer the command of the whole army upon the valiant man who should take the citadel. This honour was conferred on Joab, who was the first who mounted its walls and stormed the fortress. He was high in rank before this act of valour, but not the chief commander. Having enlarged and fortified the city, David made it the metropolis of his kingdom.

Q. What was the second war?

A. The Philistines had remained quiet during the civil dissensions, but fearing Israel when united under an able monarch, they declared war against them. This declaration made it honourable for David to oppose the enemies of his country, notwithstanding they had been his protectors; he obtained a complete victory over them in two different engagements. God was visibly with his people, which David acknowledged by calling the name of the place where he fought, Baalperazim, which signifies the Lord of breaches.

Q. What foreign alliances were contracted by David?

A. Soon after his settlement in Hebron, he strengthened his political importance by espousing Maacah the daughter of Talmi, prince of Geshur. After he had subdued the Philistines, he formed an alliance with the king of Tyre, who furnished him with workmen and materials for erecting an elegant palace in Jerusalem, which at this time received the appellation of the city of David.

Q. Did not David take measures for bringing the ark of God to Jerusalem?

A. He convened the elders of Israel and proposed removing the ark of the covenant to the royal city, which for more than fifty years had remained unhonoured in the house of Abinadab at Kirjath-jearim; this design being unanimously approved by the elders of Israel, the ark was set upon a new cart in order to be carried to Jerusalem, accompanied by the king and his whole court, together with a multitude of priests and Levites, who played on various instruments, and chanted the high praises of their Creator. Their joy was however, suspended, by a sudden and unexpected exhibition of divine displeasure. The oxen drew the cart, happening to start as they passed a threshing floor, Uzzah, one of Abinadab's sons, took hold of the ark to prevent its falling, and was immediately struck dead for his presumption.

Q. In what did the sin of Uzzah consist?

A. By the law of God no person was allowed to touch the ark on pain of death. Even the Kohathites, who were appointed to carry it, were forbidden on pain of death, to touch the sacred symbol, or even to remove it until the priests had covered it. Uzzah and his brethren appear to have assumed the office which belonged to the priests exclusively, and his conduct no doubt arose from irreverence and pride, and was of the same class of the sin of Nadab and Abihu, and therefore received a similar punishment. But though Uzzah was thus singled out to be made an example, his death was a rebuke to David, to the priests and to all Israel.

Q. What effect did this awful stroke of Providence produce upon the mind of David?

A. Though David's heart was upright and his zeal and love fervent, yet there were many things faulty in his frame of mind, as well as irregular in his proceedings on this occasion. He was angry that God had smitten Uzzah, but it does not appear with whom he was displeased, whether at his own irregular proceeding, at the sin of Uzzah, or with his Maker for inflicting this chastisement. But his conduct implied a degree of rebellion. Servile fear succeeded to zeal, hope, and joy, and he would not venture to bring the ark to Jerusalem, fearing if he received it to himself in the city, he might be smitten in like manner. But he placed it with a holy man; whose name was Obededom, of the family of Levi; he received the ark with humble confidence, notwithstanding the late awful judgments; here the ark remained a month, during which time God bestowed such a degree of prosperity upon his family, that it drew the attention of every person in the vicinity, and when it was told David, he ventured to bring the ark into his own city.

Q. What ceremonies took place at the removal of the ark to Jerusalem?

A. Every thing was conducted according to the law of Moses: for David had now learned his mistake and the reason that God had smitten Uzzah. His mind had become calm, and real love and joy animated his bosom. The priests and Levites were commanded to purify themselves from all ceremonial pollution, and by repentance, faith and prayer, to seek the favor of heaven. David joined himself with them in these solemn acts of devotion, and as a prophet, ordered the sacred parts of worship during the procession.

Q. What worship was performed during the procession?

A. Conscious of his former error and guilt, and filled with humble gratitude for his own and his people's preservation,

he began the sacred worship with solemn sacrifices and offerings for sin. On this occasion, David laid aside his distinctions of royalty; and as taking the lead in the worship of God, he wore a linen ephod, the ordinary garment of the priests when officiating, yet sometimes worn by others when performing religious service. The Israelites expressed their joy at this time, after the custom of the country, by blowing of trumpets, instrumental music and sacred dances, accompanied by psalms of praise, sung to the glory of God. The king as leader in the sacred band, played upon the harp and danced before the ark, which offended Michal the daughter of Saul.

Q. Why was Michal offended with David?

A. She appears to have professed little reverence for religion, but high ideas of temporal dignity and royalty: she considered David's transports of religious joy, in the midst of the people, as a degradation of his character and levelling himself with the vulgar. David the brave captain, conducting the army forth to battle and returning in triumph she admired; but David the saint, leading the people in the ordinances of God and settling them an example of fervency of spirit in his service, she despised in her heart and reproached him with severity for his conduct.

Q. What answer did David make to Michal's reproaches?

A. He told her he was willing to be abased, both in his own eyes and the eyes of others, if zeal in religion were to produce such an effect; at the same time, reminded her that for want of similar zeal, her father had been rejected and himself chosen to govern Israel. That he was therefore bound by every tie of interest, gratitude and love, to promote the worship of God, and that which she despised as disgraceful to him, would in the event, prove his greatest honour.

Q. Did not David propose to build a temple at Jerusalem?

A. After he was quietly possessed of the kingdom, and by his victories, in no danger from the surrounding nations, he considered how meanly the ark of God was lodged in comparison of his own sumptuous palace, and conceived a design of erecting a magnificent temple for its reception. This he intimated to Nathan the prophet, a man of great piety and wisdom, who appears to have been his companion and counsellor. Nathan, assured that the design arose from zeal for the glory of that God who was with David in all his undertakings, encouraged him to proceed; not from any immediate revelation from heaven, but according to his own judgment, as a pious and prudent man.

Q. What prevented the king from completing his design ?

A. Nathan was directed that night to go and inform him that his intentions were not acceptable to God ; he was not the proper person to perform such a work, because his hands had been defiled with blood ; but that he should have a son and successor, who should enjoy a peaceful reign and execute the designs of David, and erect a temple to Jehovah, which should be the admiration of the world. To this son of David and to his posterity, great and glorious promises were made at this time : That his throne should be established, and from him a king should proceed, whose dominion should continue forever. This king is Christ.

Q. Did the king acquiesce cheerfully in God's appointment ?

A. He not only submitted cheerfully, but prostrated himself before the Lord and with expressions of the warmest gratitude, testified his sense of past mercies and future promises : and from that time began to treasure up immense quantities of precious stones, metals, timber and other materials for the use of the promised heir.

Q. Had David no son at this time ?

A. He had six sons by six different wives ; both Adonijah and Absalom, who afterward aspired to the throne, were born before this period, and consequently set aside by God as the successors of David.

Q. Had David any more wars after this time ?

A. He subdued the Moabites ; after slaying two thirds of their people in battle, he took the remaining part captive and imposed a tribute on the country : he was also victorious over Hadadezer king of Syria, who came against him with a very great force. He planted garrisons in Syria of Damascus, and imposed a tribute on the country, and after acquiring great wealth, returned to Jerusalem, where he dedicated the spoils he had gained in war, to the service of the tabernacle. Nor were his armies less successful when led on by his generals. Abishai the brother of Joab conquered the Idumeans, and they became tributary to David. The king of Hamath sent presents to David and desired his friendship. His son was received with suitable respect at Jerusalem. By this alliance the king of Israel acquired much treasure, which he also devoted to enrich the sanctuary.

Q. Did not David remember the covenant between Jonathan and himself ?

A. After making some prudent regulations in the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of his kingdom, he gave command that enquiry should be made if any of the descendants of

Saul or Jonathan remained, that he might express to them by acts of kindness the friendship that subsisted between him and Jonathan. And when Ziba, who was formerly a servant of Saul, was brought to David, he informed him that a son of Jonathan was still living, that he was a cripple, for his nurse in her haste to escape from the enemy after the battle of Gilboa, let the child fall, and he had never recovered the use of his feet; that he had been brought up at Lo-debar, a city beyond Jordan, in the house of one Machir, who generously educated the helpless orphan, who was now grown to man's estate, and had a young son named Micah.

Q. What kindness was shewn to Mephibosheth?

A. Saul's parental estate came into the possession of David at the death of Ishbosheth. This he restored to Mephibosheth as the rightful heir. He was also admitted into the king's family as one of his own sons, and eat daily at the royal table. David rewarded Ziba for his faithfulness to Saul, by entrusting the management of Mephibosheth's estate to his care.

Q. What occasioned the war between the Israelites and Ammonites?

A. About this time, Nahash the king of Ammon died, who had been a faithful friend to David, and was succeeded on the throne by his son Hanun. When David heard of these events, he sent ambassadors to condole with Hanun on the death of his father, and to assure him of his friendship, in return for the kindness he had received from Nahash. The princes of Ammon, who had great authority with their king, suspected these ambassadors were spies sent by the king of Israel to learn the state of the country, and persuaded Hanun to treat them in a shameful contemptuous manner; for he shaved one half of their beards and cut off one half of their clothes, and sent them to David in that mutilated condition. This was considered as great an insult as could be given, and of course a declaration of war.

Q. Will you relate the particulars of the war?

A. When David heard how grossly he had been insulted in the persons of his ministers, he provided an honourable place of retirement for them, until their beards should be grown and they in a condition to appear without disgrace at court. He next prepared to revenge the insults. The Ammonites also made great preparations for war. They not only brought all their own forces into the field, but hired two kings of Syria, with two other neighbouring princes, who each brought a very large force. David was not intimidated at this formidable host; relying on the justice of

his cause, and the favour of heaven, he boldly marched to oppose them. The command of the army was given to Joab and his brother Abishai. The first battle seems to have been fought at the gate of Medeba, upon the borders of Ammon. The Israelites were opposed by two armies. Joab made a judicious arrangement of his forces. He animated the soldiers by shewing the justice of their cause and the assurance they might have of the protection of heaven. His valour in the field of battle equalled his conduct previous to the engagement, and gained him a glorious victory.

Q. Did this battle put an end to the war?

A. This defeat, far from inducing the Ammonites to sue for peace, increased their ardour for war; they formed a still stronger confederacy against Israel. When David heard of the powerful force which was prepared to invade his territories, he passed over Jordan in person, with all the forces of his kingdom. A second victory, more splendid than the former, brought the Syrians to sue for peace, which David granted on condition of their paying tribute and renouncing the alliance of Ammon.

Q. Of what crime was David guilty during this war?

A. On the return of spring, David committed the management of this war to Joab, and continued at ease in his palace, when he ought to have been fighting the battles of the Lord. Joab laid siege to Rabbah, the capital of Ammon; during the siege, David committed a most heinous and aggravated sin, which tarnished the glory of his reign and brought reproach upon religion. Walking one day on the roof of his palace, he beheld a very beautiful woman. Having been accustomed without censure to marry any single woman whom he fancied, he sent to enquire after her, and though he found she was the wife of Uriah, one of his principal officers, a man of known valour and integrity, yet he gratified his unlawful passions at the expence of honor and religion. He also used the most reprehensible means to conceal the perpetration of his crime. Finding these ineffectual, he sent a letter to Joab by the hand of Uriah himself, in which he commanded, that the injured husband should be exposed to some imminent danger, that he might fall by the hand of the enemy. This nefarious project was attended with the desired effect, and David sheltered the adulteress from punishment, by making her his wife.

Q. Why is David called the man after God's own heart, when he committed such aggravated offences?

A. The epithet seems applicable to him as a prince rather than a private character; he obeyed the command of

God in destroying his enemies, without setting up his own private judgment in opposition to his Maker, as Saul did. He established the pure worship of Jehovah in his dominions. He paid the utmost attention to the political, the commercial and the civil interests of his kingdom; and though he was permitted to fall into grievous sins, his repentance was sincere and deep, and he made public acknowledgment of his guilt. Yet the Lord punished him with temporal chastisements, to teach others that he can by no means pass by such heinous offences as David committed. Yet with all his crimes he felt true love to God, and except in one or two instances, to have loved his neighbor as himself, even though that neighbor was his enemy. By his fall we are taught the danger of wandering into the path of temptation.

Q. How was David made sensible of his sin?

A. Nathan the prophet was sent to awaken him to a sense of his guilt. The prophet addressed him with a parable of an opulent man, who had spared his own numerous flocks and seized upon an only favorite lamb belonging to a poor neighbor, to satisfy the appetite of an hungry visitor. He embellished the fable with such aggravating circumstances, and described the tenderness with which the poor man had nourished his beloved lamb, in such glowing colours, that the king hastily exclaimed, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, and he shall restore the lamb four fold, because he had no pity." When the prophet had brought him to pronounce this severe judgment against a supposed offender for crimes far inferior to his own--he overwhelmed the guilty king with confusion by replying, thou art the man!

Q. What effect did this produce upon the conscience of the king?

A. He acknowledged his transgressions, and in the language of true repentance, confessed his guilt: on this occasion he penned the fifty-first Psalm.

Q. Did not Nathan reprove David by a direct delineation of his crimes?

A. After he had applied the parable, he proceeded in a plain, convincing and severe discourse, to shew the extent and aggravation of his guilt; shewing him that by despising the commandments of God, he had despised God himself, and that the guilt was greater for being committed by a person in his high station; and one who had received such signal favors from his Maker. As the parable had particularly represented the sin of taking the wife of another man,

Nathan in his address dwelt most pointedly upon the murder of Uriah, and concluded by forewarning David of the punishment that should be inflicted on him by his own family.

Q. Did not the king's deep repentance alleviate the punishment?

A. God pardoned his sins so far as to spare his forfeited life, and assured him of his final forgiveness; but the child which Bathsheba bore him, was condemned to death as the beginning of his punishment.

Q. Why was the innocent babe doomed to suffer for the sin of its parents?

A. That the enemies of religion and David, might see that God will not forgive sin, even where there is true repentance, without inflicting temporal punishment on the offender. The death of the infant was in reality a blessing to its parents and himself; yet being predicted and publicly declared to be a rebuke for David's sin, was to him a sharp and painful chastisement.

Q. Did not the king endeavor to move God to spare the child?

A. David hoped that there was a secret condition in the threatening, and considering the infant an innocent sufferer for his crimes, he endeavored by deep humiliation, fasting and prayer, to obtain a reprieve for it. So great was his affliction, during the illness of the child, that at the end of seven days, when it died, the servants durst not acquaint their master with the event, fearing it would destroy his life. But when the king perceived by the countenances of his attendants, that the child was dead; he arose from the ground, took off his sackcloth, washed himself and assumed his ordinary robes, and went to the house of God to worship, and on his return ordered his servants to procure him some refreshment.

Q. Did not this change appear very strange to his attendants?

A. They were greatly surprised, and ventured to enquire into the reason of his conduct. David satisfied their curiosity, by informing them that while the child lived, there was hope of rendering God propitious to his prayers. But when the child was dead, it was his duty to submit to the will of heaven; that grief was then unavailing, adding, I shall go to him but he cannot return to me.

Q. What other son did Bathsheba bare to David?

A. One named Solomon, who by the special appointment of God was to succeed to the throne of Israel.

Q. How did the war succeed, which Joab was carrying on against the Ammonites?

A. Having reduced their capital to the last extremity, he sent to the king to come and take charge of the army; least he should lose the honor of the victory. David repaired immediately to the field; the Ammonites were entirely subdued; immense spoil was taken in Rabbah and other cities of the Ammonites, and the inhabitants reduced to extreme bondage. David took the crown from the king of Ammon and wore it as a badge of royal grandeur.

Q. What were the punishments which David received in consequence of his sin against Uriah?

A. Amnon, David's eldest son, had scarce attained the age of eighteen, when he became passionately enamoured of his half sister Tamar. David seems to have been too indulgent to his children, and the example he had just set them, must have had a very bad effect upon their morals. Thus he could clearly trace the sins of his children to his own misconduct, which must have aggravated his anguish in their chastisement. Amnon, giving way to his licentious passion, fell sick; and by the advice of a wicked kinsman he procured a visit from his sister Tamar. After abusing her in the basest manner, he turned her ignominiously out of his house. Tamar, who appears to have been a woman of great modesty and virtue, with all the gestures of an inconsolable mourner, went home to her brother Absalom's house, and with the deepest agony acquainted him with her misfortune. Absalom soothed her anguish and prevailed upon her to conceal her disgrace, for the sake of her father and family. Tamar listened to his advice and concealed her sorrows, but appears to have been a sincere mourner all her days.

Q. What punishment did the king inflict on his son for this crime?

A. David was very angry at Amnon, but did not inflict any punishment upon him. The tenderness of a parent for his eldest son, joined to a sense of his own guilt, doubtless prevented him. Absalom in the mean time harboured the deepest resentment against Amnon, and after two years found means of satisfying his vengeance.

Q. In what manner did he accomplish his design?

A. He invited the king and his sons to a feast: David excused himself, but permitted all his sons to attend; Absalom ordered his servants to watch when Amnon should become

merry with wine, and slay him. Amnon deserved death, but the vengeance of Absalom did not rest in merely destroying the body, but by killing him when he was intoxicated he seems to have wished to destroy both soul and body. The crime was also aggravated, by being committed under the mask of affection in the presence of his brethren; and it seems he intended his father should also have witnessed the deed. Thus was Amnon, who had been guilty of the highest breach of brotherly affection, by a similar breach of fraternal faith, slain himself.

Q. How was David made acquainted with this horrid transaction?

A. A messenger came to David and informed him that Absalom had slain all his brethren. The king rent his clothes and cast himself on the ground; but Jonadab his nephew, who had been Amnon's adviser in his crime, justly concluded that Amnon only was slain, and while he was endeavouring to comfort the king, his sons arrived and united with their father in lamenting the misery of their family.

Q. What became of Absalom?

A. He fled to the king of Geshur, his mother's father, and remained there three years.

Q. On what account was he recalled?

A. David's heart began to relent towards Absalom. Joab perceiving this disposition in the king, contrived a plan to ingratiate himself with Absalom, who was next heir to the crown, and gratify his reigning sovereign. He hired an artful woman to personate the character of a disconsolate widow, who had lost one son by the hand of his brother; that her kindred had demanded his life, but she desired the king to protect him, notwithstanding his crime, otherwise she should be left childless. When she had brought the king to pity her condition and to promise to protect her son from the avenger of blood, she applied it to his own case and persuaded him to permit Joab to recall Absalom. Thus David by another act of parental weakness exposed himself to new troubles.

Q. What were the troubles produced by recalling Absalom?

A. Absalom had no sooner returned to Jerusalem and reinstated himself in his father's affection, than he contrived the infamous design of exciting a general revolt and seizing the kingdom. He was uncommonly beautiful in his person and insinuating in his address. He procured a sumptuous equipage to attract attention, and to appear dignified as heir to the crown, at the same time he affected great condescen-

tion and affability to the people. He rose early that he might appear to have business; and stationed himself in that part of the palace assigned to petitioners; he flattered every one who had a cause to be tried with the assurance that his cause was just, that if he failed of gaining his suit, he might accuse David and the magistrates of injustice; at the same time, he threw out artful insinuations against his father's administration, suggesting that suits should not be so tedious; expensive, and partially decided, as they now were, if he were made judge of the land. David's other sons appear to have had a share in the government, but Absalom had no place assigned him, probably on account of his being a murderer. Absalom by these sinister acts acquired a dangerous degree of popularity, and soon persuaded the fickle populace, that his government would be much more equitable and beneficial than that of the reigning prince. Having by these means assured himself of a numerous body of partizans, he asked permission to go to Hebron, his native city, on pretence of performing a vow to the Lord, which he had made during his exile: the king readily granted his request.

CHAP. VII.

From the rebellion of Absalom to the death of David.

Q. What followers did Absalom take from Jerusalem?

A. As Absalom went to Hebron with David's permission, and under pretence of holding a sacred feast, two hundred men, who were doubtless of the highest rank, accompanied him and thus undesignedly countenanced his rebellion. Absalom by this artifice either intended to fix them in his interest or prevent David from placing confidence in them.

Q. What success had Absalom in gaining followers at Hebron?

A. He had previously sent spies into all parts of the land to sound the inclinations of the people. When his design was ripe for execution, trumpeters were sent into every city, who at a given signal were to proclaim Absalom king through all the tribes of Israel. This was done as soon as he reached Hebron. As it was not known whether David was dead or had admitted Absalom to a share in his authority, David's loyal subjects remained in uncertainty, while Absalom's party became more formidable.

Q. How did King David behave on hearing of this unseasonable revolt ?

A. Not having force sufficient in Jerusalem to repel so formidable an enemy, he left the sacred city exposed to the dangers of a siege ; he committed the care of his palace to ten of his concubines, and with the rest of his family and a few faithful adherents retreated to the open country.

Q. Who were David's principal attendants in this exile ?

A. The greater part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with the Cherethites, the Pelethites and Gittites, who were proselytes from among the Philistines, and numbered among David's most faithful attendants.

Q. Who was Ittai ?

A. He was the commander of six hundred Gittites who had followed David from Gath. David was unwilling to expose these strangers, who had left their country from love to his person and affection to religion, to the hardships and peril that lay before them. He therefore endeavoured to persuade Ittai to return with his followers to Jerusalem ; but Ittai generously refused to quit David.

Q. What became of the ark of God, and the Priests and Levites, in this civil war ?

A. Zadok, the particular friend of David and Abiathar the high priest, bore the ark of God out of the city, followed by all the Priests and Levites. The whole country was filled with mourning when they saw this sacred solemn procession. The king's distress added to the general sorrow, for he with all his attendants went barefoot with their heads covered, in token of self-abasement, weeping with a loud voice at the displeasure of the Almighty.

Q. Did the king carry the ark of God with him in his exile ?

A. No : he commanded the priests to carry back the sacred symbol of divine presence to Jerusalem, adding, that if he found favor in the sight of God, he would again restore him to his presence ; but he would not assume that he had the presence of God, while he was suffering for his transgressions, but submitted his cause to the mercy of him whom he had so highly offended. He also reminded the priests before they departed that they could be of great benefit to him, by remaining in the city and sending him intelligence of what passed there, and assisting him with occasional advice.

Q. Who was Ahithophel ?

A. He was a famous politician, formerly a very intimate friend of David ; but who had now deserted his cause and

joined Absalom. David apprehended more danger from Abithophel's capacity, than from the courage and numbers of Absalom's followers; when he learned that he had joined the conspirators, he addressed the Lord in one short ejaculation, and it proved effectual: he did not pray against his person, but that his counsel might be turned into folly, or might be despised as such.

Q. Who was Hushai?

A. An old friend of David, who came to offer his services to that prince, in the hour of danger, but at the king's request he consented to return and join the usurper in order to obtain an opportunity of confounding Abithophel's counsel, and gaining satisfactory intelligence of every thing passing in the enemy's quarter.

Q. What faults was David guilty of in this retreat?

A. The instructions given to Hushai, though agreeable to the stratagems of war, required deceit. He was also deceived by Ziba, the freedman of Saul, who came to meet David with refreshments for his army. By a false representation of Mephibosheth's conduct, Ziba persuaded David to deprive him of the possessions of his father and bestow them on him.

Q. What happened to David at Bahurim?

A. A man of the house of Saul, named Shimei, followed David and his little army; with the bitterest imprecations he cursed the king for the destruction of Saul's family, accusing him of being a murderer and usurper. So great was Shimei's rage that he not only cursed the king but cast stones at him and his followers.

Q. Did not the king's attendants revenge these insults?

A. They would have put the offender to death, but David would not permit it. Though free from the guilt charged upon him by Shimei, he was conscious of having murdered Uriah; he therefore submitted to the justice of God in the injurious treatment from Shimei. He replied to his attendants, since my son, by the permission of an offended God, seeketh my life, how much more may this Benjamite do it; let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord hath hidden him. Perhaps the Lord may look on my affliction and return me good for his cursing this day.

Q. Where was Absalom during this transaction?

A. He had entered Jerusalem in triumph, where he had met with Hushai, David's friend, who by ambiguous expressions of respect ingratiated himself in his confidence, and by

that means prepared the way to defeat the counsels of Ahithophel.

Q. What was the first counsel of that wily politician ?

A. To preclude the possibility of a reconciliation with the exiled monarch, he counselled the usurper to violate the females whom the king had left to the charge of his palace.— Absalom without expressing the least reluctance, in defiance of the laws of God and common decency, perpetrated this shameful wickedness, and thus inflicted on his father the most public disgrace, as had been denounced by the mouth of Nathan. Though we see the justice of God in the punishment of David, yet it forms no excuse for Absalom or Shimmei ; they both acted freely from themselves and from Satan.

Q. What was the next plan proposed by Ahithophel ?

A. He requested to be sent with a body of twelve thousand men to fall upon David's little company, while they were exhausted with their hasty flight and distracted by apprehension ; but Hushai, who had gained a high place in Absalom's esteem, argued with so much eloquence against this measure, and adduced such plausible reasons for his opinion, that the design, though evidently the most prudent, was laid aside ; Ahithophel in a fit of vexation, and despairing of the success of Absalom, returned home and hanged himself.— Thus God answered David's prayer in a more terrible manner than he expected or desired.

Q. How was David made acquainted with his danger ?

A. Hushai, fearing Absalom would be induced to listen to Ahithophel's advice, sent a young woman to Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the sons of the priests, to acquaint them with Ahithophel's counsel, and advise David to prepare immediately for defence. They were however discovered by Absalom's spies, and with much difficulty and danger at last reached the camp and informed the king of all which had passed in the city. On hearing this account, David immediately passed with all his followers over Jordan, and arrived at Mahanaim the next day. Here several of his faithful servants had assembled to tender their services. They presented him with provisions, couches, tents and other necessary articles.

Q. Did Absalom pursue after David ?

A. Having collected a powerful body of forces, he put them under the conduct of Amasa, nephew to David, pursued after his father and encamped in the land of Gilead.

Q. Had David a sufficient force to meet his rebellious son ?

A. The delay of Absalom, as Ahithophel had foreseen, afforded David's friends an opportunity of strengthening his

array, which was now in a condition to meet their opponents in the field of battle. The army of David was much smaller than Absalom's, but far superior in discipline. They were also encouraged to expect success both from the justice of their cause and the remarkable answer of David's prayer in the counsel of Ahithophel.

Q. Who had the command in the royal family ?

A. He divided his forces into three parts and committed the conduct of the war to Joab, Abishai the brother of Joab, and Ittai the Gittite. He would have taken the charge of the army himself, but was dissuaded from it by his friends, from affection to his person and the importance of his life, both to the civil and religious interests of the nation.

Q. What instructions were given by David to the army before the battle ?

A. He gave particular charge to each of the generals to spare the life of Absalom : for though he aimed not only at the government, but the life of his too indulgent father, David desired nothing so much as to preserve his guilty son, that he might have time for repentance.

Q. What were the circumstances of the battle ?

A. It was fought in the forest of Ephraim, and though Absalom's army was so much larger than David's, they were defeated ; twenty thousand of the rebels were slain. Absalom had an enormous head of hair, which he had cherished as a great ornament. As he was fleeing with great precipitation, from the enemy, he was caught by it in the thick branches of an oak. The royal mule on which he rode continued his speed; and the traitor Absalom remained suspended in the oak. In this dreadful situation he was discovered by one of Joab's soldiers, who feared to kill him on account of David's solemn charge to the commanders, but he acquainted Joab with his condition, and that general less scrupulous than the soldier, slew Absalom, and his servants flung his body into a pit and covered it with stones. Thus Absalom met with a death as extraordinary as his crimes. When Absalom was dead Joab blew the trumpet and recalled his army from pursuing the enemy, and they returned to their own dwellings.

Q. Was Joab justifiable in slaying Absalom ?

A. He undoubtedly intended the interest of David and his kingdom in destroying him, and as a political measure, it was necessary. Yet, as he had been commanded by his sovereign, to spare Absalom, and had no warrant from God to execute vengeance upon him, the action cannot be excused.

Q. How was David affected at the intelligence of his son's death?

A. The affection of a father, the thought that his own example and crimes had proved so ruinous to his family, and that when his own life was spared his beloved son was cut off in the midst of his crimes, overwhelmed him with sorrow, which caused him to cry out, in the anguish of his soul, Oh my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom, would to God I had died for thee! Oh Absalom, my son, my son.

Q. Was David blameable in grieving so much for Absalom?

A. His grief, though rational, was perhaps too extravagant, he should have submitted with patient silence to the will of God. It was also very impolitic, and tended to weaken the attachment and damp the zeal of his adherents, who instead of receiving warm commendations for their victory, felt themselves condemned for the death of Absalom, and returned grieved and ashamed from the field of glory.

Q. How was David made sensible of his error?

A. Joab entered his apartment and severely reproached him for his conduct, threatening him at the same time with a general revolt unless he concealed his grief, and shewed himself to the people. David being conscious that Joab had truth and reason on his side, stifled his resentment at this proud and insolent speech, and appeared before the people with a cheerful countenance.

Q. Were the people pleased with his condescension?

A. It effectually conciliated the esteem of his subjects, and there seemed to be but one contention among the tribes of Israel, which was, who should be first to return to their allegiance. From the time that David began to reign in Hebron over the tribe of Judah only, the distinction between Israel and Judah began to be observed. When David heard of the favorable disposition of the tribes of Israel and had no overtures from his own tribes, he employed Zadok and Abiathar, to assure the principal persons of that tribe of his affection for them, and to induce them to be as active as their brethren in returning to their duty. David was also displeased with Joab for slaying Absalom, and for the haughty manner he had been treated by him; he wished therefore to deprive him of his command and to bring Amasa to his interest, thinking he would bring all his party with him. He therefore proposed to deprive Joab of his command and give it to Amasa, in case of his return to duty.

Q. Was this proposal just or wise in David?

A. It was not, for though Joab deserved to be punished, he had too great influence with David's best friends and the army, to be supplanted by Amasa, a daring rebel, whom David ought not to have trusted.

Q. Were these arrangements of David productive of any mischief?

A. The partiality expressed by David for the tribe of Judah, joined with their forwardness and zeal in bringing him back to Jerusalem, excited such jealousy in the other tribes, that they again threw off their allegiance, and headed by Sheba, a rebellious Benjamite, bid open defiance to the king.—Joab also, inflamed by a spirit of revenge, murdered his rival.

Q. In what manner was Amasa slain?

A. He received from David a command to raise a force to quell Sheba's rebellion; but, as Amasa's appointment was unpopular, he seems to have met with some difficulty in raising troops, and tarried longer than David expected. He was therefore obliged to have recourse to his old generals, Joab and Abishai, who took what forces they had with them, and pursued after Sheba. When they had marched about forty furlongs, to a village called Gibeon, they met Amasa, who came with a great army to the king's assistance. Joab went forward to meet him, with apparent friendship, and taking his hand on pretence of saluting him, he thrust his sword into Amasa's side, who immediately expired at his feet. Thus, Joab confiding in the favour of the army, set both the king and public justice at defiance, and marched on to attack Sheba.

Q. What became of Sheba?

A. He endeavoured to raise forces through the several tribes of Israel, but after the first moment of anger subsided, few appeared willing to espouse his cause: he, therefore took refuge in the city of Abel of Beth-maachah, where he was closely besieged by Joab, and was on the eve of destruction. A prudent woman, by means of the soldiers on the wall, procured an interview with Joab, and persuaded him to discontinue the siege on condition that he should have the head of Sheba thrown to him over the wall. This the citizens, at the persuasion of the woman, agreed to perform. And Joab marched back to Jerusalem, with such increased popularity, that David feared to punish him for the murder of Amasa, or deprive him of his command.

Q. What took place while David was returning to Jerusalem?

A. Shimei was the first, who came forth to meet him, and in the most abject manner begged his forgiveness. Abishai begged that he might be put to death, as a public example for his insolence and treason ; but David refused to sully his restoration, with the execution of a single criminal ; he therefore pardoned Shimei. Meribosheth also came to meet David, as soon as he entered Jerusalem ; he had neither shaved his beard, nor changed his clothes, but had shewn every token of expressive sorrow since the time of David's departure from Jerusalem. Upon the king's enquiring, why he had not accompanied him, he replied by a simple narration of facts ; stating the treachery of Ziba, and his own inability to follow the king, in forcible but respectful and affectionate language. But, whether David did not give full credit to his assertion, or was ashamed of his own credulity, he suffered Ziba to escape merited punishment and to enjoy part of the fruits of his slander. Barzillai, the aged Gileadite, who had furnished his troops with sustenance, while he lay at Mahanaim, came to meet and conduct him over Jordan. David pressed him to go and reside with him at Jerusalem, but Barzillai refused on account of his age, but recommended his son Chimham to the king's notice : David took him into his service. After taking an affectionate leave of his venerable friend, he proceeded on his way to Jerusalem.

Q. What calamity did the Israelites sustain after David was restored to the throne ?

A. The land was afflicted with famine for three years in succession. David perceiving that it was a national judgment, enquired of God for what particular sin he thus contended with his people, and was informed by the divine oracle, that it was occasioned by the sin of Saul, who had endeavoured to exterminate the Gibeonites in defiance of the oath of Joshua and the elders of Israel. The history of Saul gives no account of this transaction ; it must have been a heinous offence against God, who, though he deferred the punishment until after the death of the offender, required that it should be expiated by the blood of his posterity.

Q. What expiation did God require at the hands of David ?

A. God commanded that David should consult with the Gibeonites and do whatever they required.

Q. What atonement did the Gibeonites demand ?

A. They required that seven men of the house of Saul should be given up to them to suffer for the transgression of their father. The king sent and took five sons of Merab, Saul's daughter, who had been educated by Michal, David's wife, and two sons of Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, and de-

livered them to the Gibeonites or the avengers of blood, who took them and hanged them on an hill, to expiate the sin of the nation.

Q. How did the mothers of these devoted youths sustain the loss?

A. No mention is made of Merab, who was the mother of the five young men brought up by Michal, as her own. It is probable that Merab was dead before this affecting judgment took place; but Rizpah took sackcloth and spread it upon a rock, where she watched the dead bodies of her sons, and suffered neither the birds to touch them by day, or the beasts of the field by night, till the Lord was pleased to remove the curse by sending rain upon the earth.

Q. Was David informed of Rizpah's conduct?

A. Yes; his servants told him, and he sympathized with the bereaved and aged parent, and gladly embraced the opportunity of relieving her from her melancholy charge, as soon as it was proper. On the first token of the Lord's reconciliation, David ordered the bodies of the devoted youths to be taken from the gibbet and decently interred with the bones of Saul and his other sons, in the sepulchre of Kish, their father. By this action, David proved that he did not act from resentment to Saul's family, but in obedience to the command of God.

Q. How are we to reconcile this transaction with the justice of God's government?

A. Whilst the grand outlines of the Lord's government are evidently righteous, some of his judgments are too deep for our comprehension; but we are bound to believe those divine appointments to be just which assume a different appearance. God cannot act unjustly; and in a future world his wisdom and justice, in the government of the world, will be made plain. The punishment of children, for the sins of their parents, and of subjects for those of their rulers, even after their death, marks God's abhorrence of destructive crimes, and teaches us to pray for our rulers, to refuse to be the instruments of their vices, and to deny our passions, out of love to posterity.

Q. What events are next recorded in David's reign?

A. He had four victorious battles with the Philistines, who were the remains of the Apakims, and possessed such enormous size and strength, as gave David and his servants, not only an opportunity of signalizing their courage, but afforded new proof of the Lord's protection. In one of these battles David was in imminent danger of being slain by a son

of Goliath, which occasioned his officers to entreat him never to engage again in battle, lest the light of Israel should be quenched by his untimely death.

Q. What sin did David commit soon after these four victories?

A. Elated with prosperity, his heart and the hearts of his people, were filled with pride, and God permitted him to require his officers to number the people, that he might know how powerful a monarchy he commanded.

Q. Did not Joab and the other commanders remonstrate with David upon this occasion?

A. Joab readily perceived that David's desire of numbering the people arose from ambition; that it was inconsistent with his character, and would bring a curse upon Israel. He therefore addressed the king with affection and respect, and endeavored to dissuade him from his design; but David was absolutely bent on his purpose. Joab and the commanders began the fatal act with reluctance. After spending nearly ten months in taking the account, they returned to Jerusalem, having numbered all Israel, except the tribes of Benjamin and Levi. These tribes were not numbered, for the king by this time, began to be sensible of his error.

Q. What was the number of the Israelites at this time?

A. The sacred historians differ in their accounts. It seems as if God had thus ordered the circumstances, that David should not be gratified in his unlawful desire. According to Josephus, there were nine hundred thousand men who were able to bear arms, exclusive of the tribe of Judah, which contained four hundred thousand.

Q. How was David made sensible of his transgression?

A. The prophet Gad was sent to him, in order to propound as a punishment, seven years famine, three months fight before his enemies, or three days pestilence.

Q. What choice did the king make?

A. In this distressing situation he preferred a calamity which came directly from God, whose mercies he knew to be very great, rather than to fall into the hands of his enemies, who should triumph in the miseries of Israel, and thus have been hardened in their idolatry. He chose the pestilence in preference to the famine, as that calamity would fall most heavily on the poor, while he and his family could supply their wants, but he chose that scourge which affected both high and low alike, and in which the hand of God would appear most distinctly.

Q. What followed in consequence of David's choice ?

A. The destroying angel was sent forth through the land ; seventy thousand fell in one day. Josephus informs us that they did not perish by a single malady, but by a great variety of excruciating diseases. When the angel appeared and stretched his arm over Jerusalem, David entreated that his people might not be cut off for his transgression, but that he and his father's house might suffer in their stead.

Q. What answer was given to this petition ?

A. The Lord was entreated for his people, and he said to the destroying angel, it is enough ; stay thine hand. The prophet Gad was sent immediately to David with this command, that he should build an altar upon the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite ; over which the destroying angel was then hovering with his drawn sword. David without delay purchased the floor with all it contained, of Araunah, who would willingly have given the whole. There he erected an altar and offered sacrifices, and the plague was stayed. This, according to Josephus, was the very place on which Abraham erected an altar for the offering of his son Isaac, and on this spot the temple was afterwards built.

Q. Had David peace and prosperity after this plague was removed ?

A. We have no account of any wars or famine during the remainder of his reign. The king had time to cultivate the arts of peace ; he enriched his kingdom by commerce. He laid up costly materials and made great preparations for building the temple : he composed a great number of sacred and prophetic hymns, which he taught the Levites to sing, accompanied with instruments, in all their public assemblies.

Q. Had Solomon any intimation of his being destined to reign ?

A. David informed him and all the people for what end he had collected such vast quantities of materials for building. That he had been prohibited from building the temple himself, because his hands had been polluted with blood and war. But that God had promised to bless his son Solomon, by giving him peace from foreign and internal seditions, and commanded that he should erect a temple to him at Jerusalem, which should be the glory of the earth. Then addressing Solomon, he charged him, as he had been ordained king before he was born, to remember the goodness of God, and render himself worthy of the honour destined him, by keeping all God's commandments himself, and by not permitting others to break them. He charged him also not to delay

erecting a temple to God, nor be terrified by the vastness of the work, as there were ten thousand talents of gold and a hundred thousand talents of silver, collected together, beside vast quantities of brass, iron, cedar trees, hewn stone, and precious stones for the building of the temple, with stone-cutters, carpenters and artificers of all kinds. David also exhorted the rulers of Israel to assist his son in this building, and informed them, that it was a mark of national ingratitude, that they had not built a temple before; that God had commanded their fathers, when they should be at peace, living in houses of their own, that they should not suffer the ark of God to dwell in tents, but should erect a temple for it. He therefore charged them as they valued the favor of God to forward the work, and when the temple should be finished, to place the ark of God therein.

Q. How were David's elder sons pleased with the appointment of their youngest brother to the kingdom?

A. Knowing it to be the appointment of God, none made any opposition, except Adonijah, who was the eldest of David's remaining sons. He resembled his brother Absalom, both in beauty of person, enormous ambition, and contempt of God's appointment, and the peace and happiness of his too indulgent father.

Q. What steps did Adonijah take to procure the kingdom?

A. He first set up a splendid equipage, with fifty footmen to run before his chariot. David had now become very infirm, through age or weakness, and either did not know of the state Adonijah assumed, or was too indulgent to reprove him for his extravagance. When Adonijah had gained a few partizans, among whom was Joab, the dreaded general, and Abiathar the high priest, he thought himself secure in his attempts upon the throne. He therefore built a strong fort at Zoheleth in the suburbs of Jerusalem, for his partizans, who intended to invest him with regal authority. He invited also all his brethren and most of the rulers of Judah, expecting that they would concur in his design.

Q. Which of the rulers remained uninvited to Adonijah's feast?

A. Zadok, the second priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, the captain of the guards. Adonijah knew that these men were too much attached to the cause of David and Solomon to be tampered with. Many others of the same character were left behind.

Q. How was David made acquainted with this rebellion?

A. Nathan the prophet sent Bethsheba, Solomon's mother, to acquaint David that Adonijah had caused himself to be proclaimed king, and to remind him of the promise he had made to her, that Solomon should succeed to the throne of Israel. As soon as she had done speaking, Nathan entered the royal presence, and asked the king, if it was by his permission that Adonijah was proclaimed king; that he had made a royal feast and had invited Joab, Abiathar, and all the king's sons except Solomon; that the sound of their trumpets had been heard throughout the city, with the shouts of his guests, proclaiming, long live king Adonijah.

Q. What steps did the king take to secure the throne to Solomon?

A. He commanded that Zadok the high priest and Benaiah the captain of the guards, should take with them all the armed men about the palace, and set Solomon upon the king's mule and conduct him out of the city to a fountain called Gishon, and there anoint him king with the holy oil. He also commanded that it should be proclaimed through the whole city by the sound of trumpets, that Solomon reigned upon the throne of David.

Q. What effect did the execution of these orders produce on the party of Adonijah?

A. The servants of David anointed Solomon king, and the transaction was signified to the people by the sound of trumpet. The people returned the shout with joyful acclamations of long live king Solomon, until both the earth and air echoed with the sound. When Adonijah and his company heard these shouts, they were greatly dismayed, and rose up from table filled with consternation. This was increased by the arrival of Jonathan the son of Abiathar, who acquainted him with all that had passed. On hearing this intelligence, Adonijah and his guests hastily quitted the house of feasting, and fled for safety to their own houses; Adonijah alone took refuge in the sanctuary. Placing himself before the sacred altar he implored his brother's forgiveness.

Q. Did Solomon grant him a pardon?

A. Yes, on condition that he proved himself a faithful subject, relinquished the royal state which he had assumed and lived peaceably in his own house, content with a retired life.

Q. What other actions are recorded of David?

A. He numbered the Priests and Levites into courses; twenty-four courses of Priests and twenty-four of Levites; and having distributed their course to them by lot, he commanded that each course should administer in the office of

the sanctuary eight days in succession, from Sabbath to Sabbath. David divided the army into twelve parts; each part contained twenty-four thousand. Over these divisions he appointed proper officers, men whom he knew were not only brave in war, but lovers of piety and justice. These officers with their men were ordered by turns to wait on king Solomon. After this he convened the heads of the several tribes, with his own sons, and addressed them in the following manner: "My brethren, you know that I had a great desire to build an house for my God at Jerusalem; but was prohibited from doing it, because my hands were polluted by the slaughter of our enemies." God commanded that his son whom he named before his birth should erect this temple. He exhorted them therefore to yield obedience to king Solomon, and not to despise him on account of his youth; but to remember that the younger was often preferred by God to the elder, as they had witnessed in his appointment to the throne. He exhorted his sons to yield obedience to their younger brother as his brothers had done to him. He next commanded Solomon to obey in all things the laws of his God and his country, as the promises of a prosperous and happy reign, were only on condition of obedience. David also, at this time, shewed them a pattern of the temple in all its parts, which he had drawn for Solomon by divine inspiration. He added to the collection he had before made about eighteen millions, from his own private treasury: and exhorted the people to contribute liberally for the erection of the sacred building.

Q. Did the people follow the king's example, and contribute to the temple?

A. Not only the rulers, the Priests and the Levites, but the common people shewed great alacrity in contributing to the work. They brought not only gold and silver in great quantities, about fifty millions, but precious stones in abundance, were delivered to Jehiel, one of the posterity of Moses, who had the charge of the treasury.

Q. What thanks did David render when he saw the liberality of the people?

A. He returned thanks in the most solemn manner to God, the parent of the universe, for condescending to receive as tokens of liberality, what had been bestowed upon them by his bounty. David as king of Israel had attained the highest eminence of worldly power and greatness; but contemplating the infinite glories of God, who inhabiteth eternity, who filleth immensity, who is underived and independent of all; who alone possesses every glorious perfection, and rules the

universe with absolute authority ; he felt and acknowledged that he and his people were nothing. From God alone, they had received those possessions, which he had inclined their hearts to bestow willingly for his service. He expressed his astonishment that God would accept the offering of such indigent and sinful creatures. "What am I, and what are my people that we should be able to offer so willingly. For all things are of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."—The royal prophet concluded his prayer, by earnestly beseeching God to continue in his people, the same holy zeal for his service as he had witnessed that day ; and that he would bestow upon his son Solomon a perfect heart and a willing mind to keep all his commandments. When David had concluded his prayer he called upon the people to bless the Lord with him. At his request they all fell down upon the ground and worshipped God. They also returned thanks to their aged king for all the blessings they had experienced during his reign. On the following day David offered sacrifices of burnt offerings and peace offerings, and the king kept a sacred feast with his people. At this feast Solomon was anointed a second time as king of Israel, in the presence of all the people, and placed with joyful acclamations on the throne of his father.

Q. What charge was given to Solomon by his father at the approach of death ?

A. He called Solomon to his bed-side, and solemnly reminded him to remember all the instructions which he had given him ; as he was now on the confines of the grave, he again exhorted him to remember that all the promises of God, to him and his posterity, were conditional, and would be fulfilled in proportion, to his and their obedience. He recommended some faithful adherents to his particular favour and protection. He exhorted him to punish Joab for the murder of Abner and Amasa, acknowledging that he would have done it had he possessed sufficient power. He reminded him that though Shimei's insolence had been pardoned as far as related to himself, yet, as he was a dangerous person, it would be well to keep his eye upon him, and treat him as his future conduct merited.

Q. How are we to consider these dying counsels of David ?

A. They ought not to be imputed to personal resentment, but a regard to justice and a pious concern for the security of Solomon's throne, which included the cause of God and of Israel. Joab had long deserved death, and David's timidity had left the sin of innocent blood unrevenged upon his family and kingdom ; self-interest had tied David's hands. —

He now saw the ill effects of his criminal weakness in sparing Joab. By his late conspiracy, Joab had proved how dangerous he might be to Solomon, and though it had weakened his power, he had still great influence. He therefore charged Solomon both from interest and justice, to wipe the stain of innocent blood from the throne, by the execution of Joab.—Shimei also deserved death, but Solomon lay under no such obligations as David was under, and if he found him restless, intriguing and troublesome, he might treat him as his wisdom dictated.

Q. How long was David's reign ?

A. He died in the seventy-fifth year of his age and the fortieth of his reign. [B. C. 1014.] He reigned seven years in Hebron over the tribe of Judah only, and thirty-three over all Israel. He left an immense treasure in his palace, beside that which was set apart for the temple. His remains were interred with due solemnity at Jerusalem.

Q. How are we to estimate the character of David ?

A. He committed greater faults, and was possessed of more virtues, than almost any man. As a King he was valiant in war ; he excited his soldiers to brave actions, not by the terror of military discipline, but by his own example in the field, and his kindness and care of them in the camp. We have several instances of the great attachment his soldiers felt for him.

Q. Will you relate some of them ?

A. When he lay concealed in the cave of Adullam, he occasionally led forth his forces to defend his country. Being extremely thirsty after an engagement during the harvest, he expressed a strong desire for a draught of water, from a well in the gate of Bethlehem, which was remarkably fine. The Philistines had possession of the city ; but three of David's officers broke through the host of the enemy, and brought their general water at the hazard of their lives.

Q. How was David affected with this act of generous valour ?

A. He was ashamed of his inordinate wish, and refused to drink the water, which he considered as the blood of these brave men, but poured it out as a drink offering before the Lord. The attachment of Ittai, Hushai, and all the proselyted Philistines, shew how much he was beloved by those immediately around his person.

Q. What other good qualities did David possess ?

A. He was prudent in council and wise in managing the af-

affairs of the kingdom. He had the cause and interests of religion ever at heart; he promoted it by his example, his instructions and his authority. He was lenient to his enemies, returning kindness for abuse, and good for evil. He followed the precept he gave in some of his last words: "He that would rule over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." He gave repeated instances of patience under persecution: how mild was his reply to his brethren, who charged him with pride and haughtiness of heart, when he accepted the challenge of Goliath? How long and how patiently did he bear with the injustice and cruelty of Saut! He was a generous and firm friend. He was meek and sincere in his disposition. Though anointed king, he did not assume the reins of government till commanded by God. And when Absalom drove him from the throne, he did not return to it without the permission of the people. He ever bore in mind his heinous offences, and repeatedly acknowledged that he was guilty of blood. He submitted with humble resignation to the heavy punishments inflicted on him and his people, for his sins, mourning with heartfelt abasement that others should suffer for his iniquity. In all instances he acknowledged his unworthiness of the great favours conferred upon him and promised to his posterity. His faults arose from the warmth of his passions, and the too great lenity of his temper. Though firm in the field of battle, he shrunk from inflicting punishment on his adherents and children.— We may say therefore that he was great as a king, great as a prophet, but weak as a man and a father. Let those who condemn and ridicule the character of David, imitate his virtues if they can, and avoid his vices.

CHAP. VIII.

The reigns of Solomon and Rehoboam.

Q. Had Solomon any trouble from his brother Adonijah after his father's death?

A. Notwithstanding Solomon had pardoned Adonijah only on condition of his shewing himself worthy to live, he made use of Bathsheba's interest with her son, to procure for him the hand of a Shumanitish virgin, who, by the advice of the physician, had been the cherisher of David's old age. This request

Solomon considered not only as highly improper, but as an indication that he still aimed at the throne, and indeed, it appears that Joab and Abiathar were plotting with Adonijah to dethrone Solomon; and that, by this measure, they supposed he would not only increase the number of his adherents, by attaching her relations and friends to his party, but by receiving the concubines of his father to wife, with the consent of Solomon, it would be a tacit acknowledgement, according to the opinions of those times, that he had a lawful right to the kingdom.

Q. Did Solomon give consent to this proposal?

A. No, he sharply rebuked his mother for making so inconsiderate and improper a request, and commanded that Adonijah should be immediately put to death. Joab who feared a like fate, fled to the horns of the altar for protection. When it was told the king that Joab had fled to the altar for safety, he sent Benaiah to bring him to answer before the tribunal of justice for his conduct. But Joab refused and chose rather to die there. When this answer was reported to the king, he commanded Benaiah to slay him before the altar, that the innocent blood shed by the hand of Joab might be wiped from his throne.

Q. Was it lawful to slay Joab before the altar?

A. The law of Moses commanded that not even God's altar should protect wilful murderers. "If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar that he may die."

Q. What punishment was inflicted upon Abiathar the high priest?

A. He was degraded from his office and confined to his own territories at Anathoth. Solomon spared his life, though he considered him worthy of death, because he had borne the Ark of God before his father David, and had partaken of all his afflictions; thus the sacerdotal dignity was transferred from the house of Eli to that of Phinehas, as God had foretold, by the prophet Samuel: Zadok, who was of the line of Phinehas, being made high priest.

Q. What was done to Shimei?

A. Solomon commanded that he should build him a house at Jerusalem, where he must continue under the immediate eye of royalty, forbidding him to pass the brook Kidron, on pain of death. Shimei acknowledged Solomon's command was wise and good, and cheerfully submitted. He lived peaceably at Jerusalem for three years, but growing secure, he either forgot the obligation laid upon him, or contemned

Solomon's authority, and despised the oath which bound him to Jerusalem; for hearing that two of his servants, who had run away from him were in Gath, he went there in pursuit of them. On his return, Solomon reminded him of the conditions upon which he had spared his life, and the oath he had taken to obey these conditions; he then commanded that he should be executed, not only for disobeying his commands, but for the wickedness that his heart was conscious of towards his father, and to show the people that complicated iniquity, though it may escape merited punishment for a time, will, finally, meet its reward.

Q. What alliance did Solomon form with the king of Egypt?

A. He married Pharaoh's daughter, and received for her portion the city of Gezer which had been taken from the Canaanites. He had before his father's death, married Naamah, an Ammonitish princess, who was the mother of Rehoboam. As Solomon is not censured in the scriptures for uniting himself with these two foreigners, it is supposed that they were both proselytes to the religion of Israel. When Solomon in his old age was drawn into idolatry, the gods of Egypt are not mentioned among his divinities.

Q. What public work did Solomon first undertake?

A. He rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, making them much larger and stronger than they were before. This illustrates the conclusion of the fifty-first psalm, where David prays, "Build thou the walls of Jerusalem," they being unfinished or imperfect at that time; it shows why the city was not thought strong enough to protect the king against the power of Absalom.

Q. What request did Solomon make to God?

A. Soon after he had ascended the throne, he went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices on the altar which Moses built. While he was there, God appeared to him in a dream, and promised to grant any petition he would make; accordingly he besought the Lord to give him wisdom and discretion to govern the people with prudence and sagacity. This petition was so acceptable to the Almighty, that he not only endowed him with wisdom, far surpassing any other human mind, but promised to add long life and prosperity to the gift. God also renewed the promise made to David of continuing the same prosperity to his descendants, provided they kept his laws and were obedient to his commands.

Q. What was the first instance Solomon gave of superior judgment?

A. Two women appeared before his tribunal with a dead and a living child, and each asserted, with equal ardour, that the living infant was her own; there being no witnesses to prove the truth, he ordered the object of their dispute to be cut asunder and equally divided between the claimants. The real mother was so affected with this sentence, that she intreated with all a mother's anxiety, the child's life might be spared and given to her opponent. The other woman desired that the decree might be executed. Solomon immediately gave the child to the woman, who, by the feelings of tenderness, had shown herself the real mother. When the people saw that by this extraordinary manner Solomon extorted the truth beyond all farther doubt, they revered him notwithstanding his youth, and yielded a cheerful obedience to his government.

Q. Did Solomon give further proofs of uncommon wisdom?

A. His wisdom shone conspicuous in the choice of his councillors, the institution of laws, the economy of his household, the strength and discipline of his army. Solomon was not only eminent in political wisdom, but his comprehensive mind was endued with universal science. He excelled in astronomy the famous astrologers of Egypt, Babylon and Arabia. He surpassed the most celebrated divines in the knowledge of God: nor was he less acquainted with common affairs; his proverbs are a rule of life. He was an excellent poet, though little of his poetry now remains. He was also deeply versed in the different branches of Natural History, and discoursed in a very instructive manner upon the nature, properties, and use of the several species of plants and animals which are produced on the earth, in air, or ocean. Beloved by his friends, revered by his allies, and dreaded by his enemies, he lived in the most profound tranquillity and enriched his kingdom, particularly his metropolis, to such a degree that even gold and silver lost their intrinsic value by extraordinary abundance. Strangers flocked thither from all parts of the earth to behold the splendour of his court, and those who had formed the highest expectations were obliged to acknowledge that their conceptions had fallen far short of the realities.

Q. Did Solomon obey his father's injunctions and build a temple?

A. As soon as he had arranged the affairs of his kingdom he began the important work. Hiram, king of Tyre, who had been the ally and friend of David, continued the same kindness to his son. He provided timber from mount Liba-

men for the Temple, and received in return wheat and other provisions for his household. Hiram also provided workmen, who accompanied those of Solomon, both in carving timber and hewing stone.

Q. At what time was the foundation of the Temple laid?

A. In the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and in the 480th after the emancipation from Egypt. The king's ardour in this work was so great, and his resources so immense, that it was finished in about seven years, and foreigners were attracted to Judea by a new object, which is justly styled the glory of the earth.

Q. Will you relate the circumstances of the dedication?

A. The ceremony of the dedication began on the eighth day of the seventh month of the sacred year, or the first of the civil year, before Christ, 1005. The ceremony of dedication lasted seven days, after which began the feast of tabernacles, and continued seven days longer.

Q. What part did Solomon take in the ceremony?

A. He accompanied the procession with his whole court, knelt down, and spreading his hands toward heaven, dedicated the building to God in an appropriate prayer, which he offered in the audience of all the people, entreating the Divine mercy to make it His residence, and to accept the prayers of all the sons of Jacob which should be directed thither in every exigence, from all parts of the world. A miraculous fire descending upon the altar and consuming the victims, proved that these petitions were accepted.

Q. What other buildings did Solomon erect at Jerusalem?

A. He built a magnificent palace for himself, and another for his queen, the princess of Egypt. He also rebuilt and colonized twenty cities in Gallilee, and fortified many other cities in his kingdom.

Q. Did Solomon encourage commerce?

A. He caused a navy to be built upon the coast of the Red Sea, and sent it under the care of some expert Tyrian mariners, to Ophir, which by some is supposed to be the island of Ceylon, by others to be Sophala in Egypt, from whence he received a great quantity of precious stones, metals, ivory, ebony, spices, and some peculiar sorts of timber.

Q. Who was the Queen of Sheba?

A. An illustrious princess, supposed to be a descendant of Abraham by Keturah. Having heard of the splendour of Solomon's court, and the exalted powers of his understanding, she traveled from a distant country, supposed to be

Ethiopia, to satisfy her curiosity, and to be instructed in the knowledge of the true God.

Q. How was she received by Solomon?

A. The king received her with great respect, and entertained her with a view of all the magnificent objects in his metropolis, at which she expressed the highest satisfaction; but she was more attracted by his wisdom than power, and owned that it was not without reason that he was esteemed the wisest prince of his time: they parted with an exchange of rich presents.

Q. Was the whole life of Solomon equally prosperous and happy?

A. As he advanced in years, he became infatuated with the love of idolatrous women, and gradually sunk into the practices of their national abominations, and Jerusalem was surrounded with idols, temples and altars, in open defiance of the divine command. In consequence of this defection, the deluded prince was assured in a dream, that his successors should be punished for his ingratitude, with the loss of the whole kingdom, except the tribe of Judah, which should continue its allegiance, in consideration of the promise which God had given to David.

Q. Was Solomon awakened to repentance by this denunciation?

A. The sacred histories are silent upon that point, but we have reason to believe, from the book of Ecclesiastes, that he not only repented, but made public confession of his offences. The sins of David were not visited upon his posterity, because they were personal, but the sins of Solomon infected all Israel, and are justly punished by national calamity. Solomon died after a reign of forty years, and was buried in the city of David. [B. C. 980.]

Q. What was the state of the kingdom after Solomon became an idolater?

A. During the latter part of Solomon's reign, a spirit of discontent had been diffused through the land of Canaan and the adjacent countries, so that Rehoboam, the heir apparent, had three powerful enemies to encounter. Hadad, king of Edom, who bore an inveterate hatred to the house of David, Rezon, king of Damascus, and Jeroboam, an enterprising Ephrathite, who had been told by the prophet Abijah, that God would give him the sovereignty over the ten tribes, which were to shake off their allegiance to the reigning family.

Q. Who succeeded Solomon?

A. His son Rehoboam.

Q. What was the character of this young prince.

A. He possessed but a moderate understanding. Being the unrivalled heir of a flourishing kingdom, his natural pride and rashness were increased by the flattery of the young men with whom he was educated, and, by their advice, he assumed so arrogant a demeanor, on his first ascending the throne, as to disgust his subjects and occasion the desertion of the ten tribes.

Q. What were the particulars of this defection?

A. The people of Israel appear to have been dissatisfied with the latter part of Solomon's reign; being assembled at Shechem to crown Rehoboam, they complained to him of the taxes they had been obliged to pay his father, and requested that he would remit them, on which condition they would serve him faithfully, as they had served Solomon. Rehoboam consulted the elders, who had been the councillors of his father, who advised him, by all means, to comply with the demands of the people, otherwise he must not expect they would submit quietly to his government. But Rehoboam could not bring his haughty mind to accede to conditions proposed by his subjects, and he followed the advice of his youthful companions, who counselled him to speak with authority, and damp the mutinous spirit of his subjects by resolute language. He accordingly gave the people to understand that he would make their yoke heavier than his father had ever made it; in proportion, his little finger should be heavier than his father's loins. The people of Israel being highly exasperated at this reply, rebelled against Rehoboam, and chose Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, for their king.

Q. Did Rehoboam attempt to regain his authority over the rebellious tribes?

A. He first sent Adoram, an aged and experienced man, whom Solomon had placed over the finances, either to persuade the people to return to their duty, or to demand the taxes, as a feible attempt to enforce his imprudent threats; but, whatever his message might have been, the people were in no disposition to receive it; accordingly he lost his life in a popular tumult, and Rehoboam fled in terror to Jerusalem.

Q. What was the next step he took to bring them to submission?

A. He assembled all the forces of Judah and Benjamin to make war upon Israel, [B. C. 975] but God commanded him,

by the mouth of Shemaiah the prophet, to desist, for this defection of the tribes of Israel was from Him, as a judgment upon the nation for their idolatry. Rehoboam was not so lost to a sense of duty as to prosecute the war after this prohibition, but contented himself with rendering his small portion of territory formidable: for this end he built many strong cities for defence against his numerous enemies. The number of his subjects daily increased by pious families from the other tribes, who did not choose to separate from the true worship of God.

Q. Was Rehoboam's reign prosperous?

A. He was at first; but prosperity hardened his heart. He married eighteen wives, and had, beside, thirty concubines; he had twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. He gave the government of the fortified cities into the hands of his sons, but he appointed Abijah, the son of his favourite wife, to be his successor. At this period he appears to have governed wisely, and his sons in amity with each other, strengthened his kingdom. But Rehoboam forgot the power by which he stood, forsook the worship of God, and drew his people into idolatry. For this sin, God brought a powerful enemy against Judah: Shishak, king of Egypt, who came with an army to besiege Jerusalem.

Q. Was Rehoboam made sensible of the cause of this calamity?

A. Yes, the prophet Shemaiah reprov'd him, in the name of the Lord, for his idolatry, and for the people's, and shewed them the cause of these disasters; on which Rehoboam and his people humbled themselves for their sins, and God graciously spared their lives and their existence as a nation; but permitted the city of Jerusalem to be pillaged by the Egyptians, and the golden ornaments to be taken away, as a punishment for their apostacy. After Shishak had withdrawn his army from Jerusalem, Rehoboam continued the forms of worship. He made bucklers and shields of brass, in the room of those of gold, which had been taken away.

Q. How did Rehoboam reign during the rest of his life?

A. Though he was not possessed of true piety himself, many of his subjects were, and for their sakes God preserved the kingdom of Judah from all their enemies; and the remainder of his reign, which continued sixteen years, was flourishing and peaceable; [B. C. 958.] After his death his son Abijah took quiet possession of the throne.

CHAP. IX.

The history of Judah and Israel, from the death of Rehoboam to the reign of Ahab king of Israel.

Q. How did Jeroboam reign in Israel?

A. As soon as he was settled as king in Israel, he built him a palace in Shechem, and another at Peniel, that they might be the seats of government on each side Jordan. Jeroboam set up two idols, one on the northern, and the other at the southern extremity of the country. Bethel, where one of the idols stood, was held sacred on account of the altar Jacob erected there. The city of Dan was also revered by idolators, since the days of Micah. Jeroboam persuaded the people that, as God was every where present, they could render him as acceptable service in their own cities, as to take so long a journey to Jerusalem. Thus he persuaded the people to forsake the true worship of God, lest, by going to Jerusalem, they should be induced to return and submit to the government of the house of David. The greater part of the people readily concurred in his measures, which suited their convenience and inclination, but the priests, Levites, and many Israelites, were honourable exceptions. Jeroboam, also, made priests out of every tribe, and generally of the lowest class, that they might be more subservient to his purposes. The Levites being thus deprived of their tythes, resorted to the kingdom of Judah, and strengthened the government of Rehoboam?

Q. What reproof did Jeroboam receive for his idolatry?

A. When he had assembled the people to offer sacrifices upon the new altar at Bethel, and was himself officiating as high priest, a prophet from Jerusalem denounced the destruction of the new altar, by a future king of Judah, who should be called Josiah; and, as a proof of the truth of his prophecy, assured the multitude that the altar should that day be rent, and the ashes upon it fall to the ground. The prophet had scarcely finished his prediction, when the altar burst asunder, and the ashes were scattered.

Q. What effect was produced by this prediction?

A. The king was highly incensed, and stretched forth his hand to seize the prophet, but to his great surprize perceived it instantly wither. This incident brought him to a sense of his guilt, and he entreated the prophet to pray for him that he might recover the use of his hand; the prophet, without

hesitation, prayed for the king, whose hand was immediately restored.

Q. What became of this prophet?

A. He had been commanded by God not to receive any refreshment in the apostate city of Bethel, or accept the slightest civility which would have the appearance of fellowship with these idolaters, whose works of darkness he was sent to denounce. This command, he at first, punctually obeyed, for though solicited by the king himself, to return with him to the palace, and promised a royal recompense, he refused; but he was afterward seduced by a false prophet, to disobey God, by accepting entertainment at his house, and was slain by a lion on his leaving the city. The false prophet buried him at Bethel.

Q. Was Jeroboam's life reformed by these miraculous events?

A. It was not; he continued to practice every species of abomination. At length his son Abijah fell sick, and Jeroboam desired his wife to disguise herself in a mean habit, and go to the prophet Ahijah, and enquire of him whether his son would recover. As the queen of Israel entered the prophet's house, God informed him who she was, and directed an answer to her enquiry.

Q. What was the purport of the prophet's message?

A. When he heard the sound of her footsteps upon the door, he cried out, "come in thou wife of Jeroboam, why concealest thou thyself, thou art not concealed from God, I am commanded by him to bring thee heavy tidings. Go inform thy husband, thus saith the Lord, as thou hast forgotten me who raised thee from a low estate to be king over Israel, and hast forsaken my laws, and hast caused Israel to forsake them by worshipping idols, I also will cast thee far from me, and will destroy thy family, who shall all be violently slain, and their dead bodies devoured by dogs, or ravenous beasts; my people also, who have forsaken my worship, shall partake of thy punishment, and be scattered among the heathen. Go return to thy husband, and when thy feet shall enter the city, thy child shall die: in mercy to him I remove him from life, for he only, of all thy house, shall be honourably interred, because, in him I have found true piety."

Q. What observations are we led to make upon this portion of history?

A. We learn that Jeroboam was too much enlightened himself to trust to the idol worship he had established; for, like unbelievers of the present day, in an hour of danger he

applied to God for assistance. This also teaches us that unbelief proceeds from the heart, not the head. As Jeroboam's sin was greater than Solomon's, therefore, his punishment was more severe. His wife being a partner in his guilt, shared deeply in his punishment. One cannot picture a situation more truly deplorable than her's; obliged to return with the prophet's heavy message to her husband, and knowing that every step she made toward the city, shortened the period of her beloved son's existence.

Q. Did the prophecy of Abijah have any effect in reforming Jeroboam?

A. Jeroboam still persisted in his transgressions, notwithstanding the prophecy was confirmed by the death of his son, who was buried with princely honours, and lamented by all Israel for his virtues. Jeroboam reigned about twenty two years; and was succeeded by his son Nadab.

Q. How did Nadab reign?

A. Nothing remarkable happened during his short reign: He was a profligate prince and retained all the idolatrous practices of his father; and, at the expiration of two years was killed at the siege of Gibbethon, by a man named Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar. Baasha seized upon the vacant throne and slew all the family of Jeroboam, and left their bodies to be devoured by ravenous animals, as the prophet had predicted.

Q. Can you give any account of the reign of Abijah, the son of Rehoboam?

A. Abijah reigned but three years. Jeroboam king of Israel, despising his youth, made war upon him. Abijah trusting in the protection of heaven, led his little army to engage the numerous host of Jeroboam. When the two armies were drawn up in battle array, the king of Judah stepped between the combatants and desired Jeroboam and Israel to listen to him. When silence prevailed, he represented in a short but animated discourse, the enormity of their sin in departing from the true worship of God. He warned them of the danger of drawing their swords against their brethren, who had never injured them, and entreated them for their own sakes to desist. But Jeroboam confiding in his numbers, would not withdraw his forces, but took advantage of the time Abijah was addressing them, to send a detachment privately to surround the army of Judah. This at first discouraged Abijah's troops, but he encouraged them to trust in God, upon which they all joined in prayer for divine assistance. The priests sounded the trumpets, and the army of

Judah fell upon the enemy, with great shouts. God withered the courage of the Israelites, who were defeated with greater slaughter than has ever been recorded in any other battle, the number of slain being five hundred thousand.

Q. Who succeeded Abijah ?

A. Asa, his son, who was possessed of true piety and exerted himself to restrain the wickedness of his subjects, by abolishing those idolatries which had been connived at in the preceding reign, and by using his authority for the observing of the worship of God at the temple. He displaced his mother from being queen, because she had made an idol. He also banished all persons of infamous characters from his dominions. Neither was he neglectful of the civil interests of his kingdom. He prepared a large and well disciplined army for its defence. He built and fortified a great number of cities ; and though averse to war, was ever ready for defence.

Q. Was Asa engaged in any war ?

A. In the tenth year of his reign, Zerah king of the Ethiopians, made an expedition against him. His army consisted of 900,000 foot and 500,000 horse, and 300 chariots. When Zerah had reached Maresbah, a city of Judah, Asa led out his forces against him. Though Asa was prepared at all times for an enemy, he had not a force sufficient to defend the country from so powerful an army as that of the Ethiopians. Yet the king of Judah felt no fear at the approach of this formidable force ; for he trusted in the Lord whom he had served faithfully. Before he engaged in battle he made the following prayer : " Lord, it is nothing for thee to help, whether with many or few : help us Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God, let not men prevail against thee." The event accorded with Asa's faith ; the Ethiopians were defeated, and Judah greatly enriched with their spoil.

Q. What message was sent to Asa by the prophet Azariah after this victory ?

A. Azariah met them on their return, and desired the king and his whole army to attend to the word of God. He informed them that the Lord had granted them this victory, in consequence of their late reformation in religion, and assured them, if they persevered in worshipping God with perfect hearts, they should be always successful over their enemies. But if they relapsed into sin, and particularly into the sin of idolatry, they should be punished with every species of calamity, until, finally, they should have neither prophet or priest to direct them in the paths of truth ; but their cities

should be destroyed, and they should be scattered over the face of the earth. The prophet concluded his address, by advising them to adhere to the laws of their God, that happiness, both here and in another world, might be their portion.

Q. What effect had the prophet's address upon the minds of the people?

A. It quickened both the king and his subjects in their duty, and such was the prosperity of Asa's kingdom, that a great number of the Israelites joined themselves to the government of Judah.

Q. Did Asa continue to rule with wisdom during his whole reign?

A. In his old age, he grew distrustful of God. Baasha king of Israel, took a city from Judah called Ramah, and fortified it. This city was so situated on the frontiers that it commanded the entrance into Judah, and not only prevented the Israelites from having any intercourse with that sister kingdom, but was a great inconvenience to Asa's subjects. The king instead of putting his trust in God and attempting with his own subjects to regain the lost city, sent a large present of the consecrated treasures to the king of Damascus to engage him to make war upon Baasha, that he might withdraw his troops from Ramah.

Q. Did the king of Damascus accept these proposals?

A. Asa's bribe was so large that the king of Damascus was induced by it to desert the alliance of Baasha, and marched with a large force to invade his territories. Upon which Baasha withdrew his troops from Ramah; and Asa made use of the materials which were prepared for building Ramah, erecting two cities; one he called Geba and the other Mizpah.

Q. What reproof did Asa receive for his misconduct?

A. Hanani the prophet informed him, that because he had relied upon the king of Syria in an hour of distress, and not on God, who had delivered him from very powerful enemies, he should from that time be troubled with continual war. Upon receiving this message Asa was angry at the prophet, and confined him in the stocks, and when some of the people censured this conduct, he oppressed them also.

Q. Did Asa ever repent of these sins?

A. We are not informed of his repentance, though we must believe that he did repent, for the scripture records that his heart was perfect with God all his days. He lived 15 years.

after this event, but having openly dishonoured God, the latter part of his reign was obscure and inglorious. He was also troubled with a painful disorder in his feet, which was a just punishment for confining the prophet's feet in the stocks : under this excruciating correction he relapsed into his former sin of relying upon man and not upon God, trusting to physicians for relief, and not uniting prayer with proper means for restoration. As the Lord has pleased to throw a cloud upon his memory, we will not try to penetrate it, though we trust that he repented of this sin. [B. C. 951.] His whole reign was forty years, and notwithstanding the blemishes in his character, he was an excellent king, and his subjects were happy under his government.

Q. What transaction took place in the kingdom of Israel during Asa's reign ?

A. Baasha, who slew Nadab the son of Jeroboam, as has already been related, retained the government. He made the city of Tirzah his capital. He reigned 24 years, and was more impious than Jeroboam or his son. The Lord sent a prophet to warn and reprove this wicked prince, threatening to cut him off and his family, as he had Jeroboam's, unless he reformed.

Q. Did Baasha reform ?

A. No ; the prophet's message seemed rather to animate him in evil than to bring him back to duty. He performed nothing worth notice, except the attempt he made to fortify Ramah : he died shortly after that transaction, and was succeeded by his son Elah, who reigned but two years, being treacherously slain by Zimri, one of his officers.

Q. What became of Zimri ?

A. After he had slain Elah, he assumed the kingly power, and slew all the family of Baasha, who thus perished for their impiety. Yet Zimri was not permitted to reap the reward of his treachery, for he had not enjoyed the kingly power but seven days, before he was besieged in his capital by Omri, who had been declared king by the army, and was so closely pressed that he shut himself up in the royal palace, and setting it on fire, perished in the flames.

Q. Did Omri obtain quiet possession of the throne after the death of Zimri ?

A. The Israelites were divided ; one party declared for a favorite of the populace named Tibni ; the rest adhered to the cause of Omri. This division occasioned a civil war, which lasted about six years, and ended with the death of

Tibni, and the establishment of Omri upon the throne of Israel.

Q. How did Omri reign ?

A. He was a very wicked prince, and was more zealous for the worship of idols than any of his predecessors : He was valiant, and seems to have reigned with great splendor. He removed the seat of government from Tirzah to Samaria, which city he founded. Omri reigned twelve years, computing the time from the death of Zimri. While the kingdom of Israel was torn by intestine commotions, Judah was governed by Asa, a pious prince, who began his reign before the death of Jeroboam, survived Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri and Omri, and lived to the fourth year of Ahab.

CHAP. X.

The History of Judah and Israel during the reign of Ahab.

Q. Who succeeded Omri ?

A. Ahab, his son, who was a greater enemy to religion and virtue than his depraved father ; and, without any political inducement, proceeded to still grosser idolatries. He married Jezebel, daughter of Etabaal, king of the Zidonians, a woman so furious and zealous in the worship of Baal, that her name has become a proverb.

Q. What prophecy was fulfilled at this time ?

A. The curse pronounced by Joshua against the rebuildler of Jericho. Four hundred and forty years had elapsed since Joshua pronounced, "cursed be the man before the Lord who rebuildeth the city of Jericho : he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."

Q. Who was the man that dared to set this awful prediction at defiance ?

A. Hiel of Bethel, who had been accustomed to idolatry in his native city, set the curse of God at defiance ; and though his eldest son died when he laid the foundation of Jericho, he did not desist from the undertaking. When he had completed the work his youngest son also died ; the rest of his children are supposed to have died in the intermediate space of time.

Q. What judgments were inflicted on Israel for the sins of Ahab and Jezebel ?

A. The first was a famine of three years, which was predicted by the prophet Elijah.

Q. How was Elijah fed during the season of famine?

A. He was commanded to hide himself by the brook Cherith, where ravens, by the command of God, brought him bread and flesh, both morning and evening, and he drank of the water of the brook, till the brook became dry.

Q. Where did the prophet go when the brook became dry?

A. God sent him to a widow of Zarephath, near Zidon, to be maintained by her, during the remaining years of famine.

Q. How did this poor widow find sustenance for her family and the prophet?

A. This woman, who was a Zidonian, of the same nation of Jezebel, was a true worshipper of Jehovah, and when requested by the prophet to permit him to partake of her scanty provisions, she replied, that she had no more than one handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, and that she was then gathering sticks to prepare it for the last meal for herself and son, who afterwards must inevitably perish with hunger. The prophet repeated his request and bid her not to fear to use hospitality; assuring her that her barrel of meal should not waste, neither should her cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord should send rain upon the earth. The widow believed the word of the Lord; she conducted Elijah to her house, where she and her family and the prophet were all miraculously fed, during the remaining years of famine.

Q. Why was Elijah sent to a widow of Zidon rather than to a widow of Israel for protection?

A. Probably God employed the ravens first, and then a poor Gentile, rather than any distressed Israelite, to teach his offending people, they were more unworthy of his mercy than the heathen. It was also an allusion of God's sovereignty, and a pre-intimation of the calling of the Gentiles.

Q. What further miracle did Elijah perform while he remained with the widow of Zarephath?

A. Her son died, and was miraculously restored to life at the intercession of the prophet. This miracle confirmed the faith of the widow, which before appears to have been wavering.

Q. What heathen author makes mention of this famine?

A. Meaneler mentions it in the history of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, who was the father of Jezebel. Meaneler makes

the drought to continue but one year, and perhaps the country of Zidon was not so severely afflicted as the kingdom of Israel.

Q. What particular sins had Ahab committed which occasioned this severe famine ?

A. He had not only caused all the altars of God, which remained in Israel, to be destroyed, but the prophets whom God had from time to time raised up to instruct his backsliding people, to be slain. These prophets, it is supposed, had been continued in the seminaries of the prophets ever since the time of Samuel. Though the whole land appeared devoted to idolatry, a remnant of pious persons were left. Ahab, at Jezebel's instigation, ordered all the true worshippers of God to be cut off. Notwithstanding the rage of the persecution, Obadiah, who was the governor of Ahab's house, found means to preserve a few of them from Jezebel's fury, by concealing them in two caves and feeding them at his own expense.

Q. Did not Ahab seek to destroy Elijah ?

A. Yes ; he sent to seek him in all the neighboring kingdoms, and so earnest was he to discover his retreat, that he caused the rulers of these countries to swear that they did not conceal him ; yet Elijah remained a year in Ahab's kingdom, and the remainder of the years of famine in the country of Zidon.

Q. On what occasion did Elijah visit Ahab ?

A. When the time drew near, in which God intended to remove his judgments from Israel, he commanded Elijah to go into Samaria, and meet Ahab, who had set out with his faithful servant Obadiah, to search through the whole country in order to find sustenance for the few beasts that remained alive. Ahab and Obadiah separated from each other in their search : Elijah met the latter, who saluted him with the greatest respect. The prophet desired him to go and inform his master that he had returned.

Q. Was Obadiah willing to undertake the office ?

A. He was reluctant to undertake so dangerous a message. He knew the prophet had been concealed by miracle from Ahab's search, and he could not believe that Elijah intended to venture into the presence of his enraged and bitter enemy ; and enquired of the prophet how he had offended, that he wished to expose him to so much danger, as to acquaint Ahab that he was in Israel, expressing his belief that the spirit of God would convey away Elijah from Ahab, but he should be left to suffer. And as an extenuation of his backwardness

L

to fulfil Elijah's request, mentioned that he had feared the Lord from his youth, and that it was not want of zeal, where it could be useful ; for he had hazarded his life in preserving the prophets of the Lord during the persecution raised against them by Jezebel. But on Elijah's assuring him that he would that day meet Ahab, Obadiah went to deliver his message.

Q. Can you relate the meeting between Ahab and Elijah?

A. Ahab accused him of being the trouble of Israel, but the prophet assured him that it was not he that caused these calamities, but the king's own sins, in departing from the worship of the true God. As a proof of the truth of this assertion, he desired him to collect Israel at mount Carmel, with all the prophets of Baal, which were four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves, which were four hundred, which were maintained at Jezebel's table, and let it there be decided whom they ought to worship. The king being overawed by the boldness of the prophet, or softened by the dreadful state of the country, gave directions to assemble the people as Elijah requested.

Q. What trial did Elijah make to convince the people that Jehovah was the true God?

A. He desired the prophets of Baal to erect an altar to their god, and offer a sacrifice thereon, and he would erect an altar to the Lord, and the God who sent fire to consume the victim, they should acknowledge as God ; to this the people agreed with one voice. An altar to Baal was erected ; the bullock slain and laid upon the wood ; the priests of Baal cried to their god for several hours, and cutting themselves with knives, mingled their own blood with that of the victim ; but the demon they worshipped was not allowed to give them an answer by fire. When Elijah had given the priests of Baal a fair trial of their faith, he repaired an altar which had been formerly erected to the God of Israel at this place. He then placed the wood and victim for sacrifice ; then he ordered a large quantity of water to be poured, at three different times, on the altar, in order to preclude all possibility of suspicion. He then called upon the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, to hear his prayer, and give his people a token that day, that he was indeed God, and Elijah his prophet : the prayer was scarcely ended before fire from heaven fell upon the altar and consumed the sacrifice.

Q. Was this miracle convincing to the Israelites?

A. They all, with one accord, fell on their faces and cried,

the Lord he is God, the Lord he is God. By the command of Elijah, they slew all the prophets of Baal, who, as apostate Israelites and teachers of idolatry, were condemned criminals by the Mosaic law. But the prophets of the groves were not slain; either they were not present, or being Zidonians, were not considered so criminal as the priests of Baal. Ahab, being overawed by the miracle he had witnessed, consented to the execution.

Q. Did God, at this time, send rain upon the earth?

A. After the sacrifices were ended, Elijah encouraged Ahab to refresh himself cheerfully with his friends, for God would immediately remove the heavy calamity which had so long afflicted the country. While the king was refreshing himself and his attendants, the prophet retired to the top of Carmel to entreat the Lord to send rain on the parched earth. When he knew, by a visible sign, that God had granted him his request, he desired Ahab to make ready his chariot, lest the rain should prevent his return to the city. Elijah being strengthened by divine aid, though old, and weak from fasting, ran as a footman before the king's chariot, to shew Ahab that, as a subject, he was faithful, though, as a prophet, he had been the instrument of afflicting him. In the mean time, the heavens were covered with clouds, and the thirsty earth replenished with water.

Q. How was Jezebel affected by the destruction of her prophets?

A. She was filled with rage, and sent a messenger to threaten Elijah with immediate death. The prophet, being thus warned, fled to Beersheba, which belonged to Judah, where he left his servant in a place of safety, but he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness; there he sat down under a juniper tree and prayed for death. How inconsistent are the best of men. Elijah fled, through fear of death, from his country, where he might have been useful in supporting the cause of religion, which had so lately been established by miracle, and which, by the zeal and malice of Jezebel, was in danger of being again overthrown. Yet now, through impatience, he sought death, which before he shunned.

Q. What happened to Elijah while he lay in this state of despondency?

A. The prophet having fallen asleep through weariness and long fasting, an angel of the Lord touched him and bade him arise and eat. Elijah awoke, and having refreshed himself, was so much strengthened by the heavenly support,

that he travelled forty days without food, or even the desire for it.

Q. To what place did he travel?

A. To Horeb, the mount of God; so called from its being the place where God appeared to Moses.

Q. What communication had Elijah with God at this time?

A. The voice of God addressed him in a tone of reproof. "What dost thou here Elijah?" The prophet replied, in his own vindication, that he had not fled from his work through want of zeal, for he had been very zealous in the cause of God, but it had been of no use, for the Israelites had thrown down God's altars, slain his prophets, he alone was left, and his life was sought for. So bitter were his feelings, that he is said to have made intercession against them. God then commanded Elijah to go forth and stand upon the mount, probably the same place where he had manifested his glory to Moses. Elijah went as directed, and the Lord appeared to him there.

Q. In what manner did God manifest himself to Elijah?

A. His presence was preceded by a wind which rent asunder the mountains and rocks, by an earthquake, and still more tremendous, by a fire similar to that which appeared on mount Sinai at the delivery of the law. When these terrific signs of God's approach had passed, a still small voice manifested to Elijah the presence of the great Jehovah. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle, and stood at the entrance of the cave. The voice again said, "What dost thou here Elijah?" The prophet made again the same reply as recorded above.

Q. What command did he receive at this time?

A. To return to his country, and anoint Jehu to be king over Israel; Hazael of Damascus to be king over Syria, and Elisha to be a prophet in his stead. By these three persons, he assured the prophet, Israel should receive the punishment of their sins. By these appointments, he taught the prophet that he was infinitely more jealous for his cause than he could be; and would, by no means, permit the enemies of religion to triumph. As a further encouragement to Elijah, the Lord informed him that he had reserved to himself seven thousand persons, in Israel, who had never bowed the knee to Baal.

Q. Did Elijah anoint all these persons himself?

A. He appointed Elisha with his own hands. Hazael and

Jehu were anointed, by Elijah, or by persons who acted by the command given to him.

Q. Where did he find Elisha?

A. In his father's field, ploughing: Elijah cast his mantle upon him, and he immediately received the spirit of prophecy, and having taken leave of his parents, he followed Elijah and became his disciple.

Q. What remarkable deliverance was granted to Israel under the reign of Ahab?

A. Benhadad the king of Syria, encouraged by the late desolating judgments, made war upon Ahab. As the king of Israel was in no condition to defend himself, he removed his choicest treasures into strong cities, shutting himself within Samaria, which was strongly fortified. The Syrian army easily penetrated into the country, and laid seige to the capital. Benhadad being sure of victory, sent an ambassador to Ahab, promising conditions of peace, by which Ahab understood no more than a claim of dominion over him and his kingdom, and abjectly agreed to the conditions. Benhadad then explained himself more fully by a second message, demanding the immediate possession of all his treasure, with his wives and children, and whatever should appear pleasant and desirable to his followers, in all the land of Israel.

Q. Did Ahab consent to this demand?

A. Finding that the king of Syria was determined to destroy the whole land, he assembled the elders of Israel, and consulted what could be done. They would not allow him to consent to such ignominious terms; upon which Benhadad sent a blustering message, confirmed by an oath to his idols, implying that he would enter Samaria with such a numerous host that the whole city, when reduced to a heap of dust, would not afford an handful for each soldier. The king of Israel very patiently replied; "Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself, as he that putteth it off."

Q. How did the king of Syria receive the reply of Ahab?

A. He was drinking in his pavilion when his messenger brought Ahab's answer, and being very much incensed, he ordered his officers to invest the city with his whole army.

Q. How were the Israelites delivered from his power?

A. The Lord sent a prophet to Ahab and promised to give him the victory over the Syrians. Ahab, sensible that the promised victory must be miraculous, enquired of the prophet by whom it must be attained, and was directed not to

employ his bravest soldiers, but the pages of the chief men in the different provinces. Ahab next inquired who should lead them to battle, and was commanded to lead them himself. He collected the young men as he was ordered, and found that they amounted to only seven thousand.

Q. Relate the circumstances of the battle.

A. With this small force, the king of Israel sallied out of Samaria, at noon, when he knew that Benhadad and his followers would be heated with wine. Hearing that a small number of the enemy had appeared without the wall, Benhadad gave orders not to kill, but to take the men alive and bring them before him: These orders served to embarrass the Syrians, who, in endeavouring to seize the enemy, were slain in great numbers. The whole army being seized with terror, fled. Benhadad himself escaped on horseback. The rest of the Israelites pursued after the Syrian army, slew a great number, and obtained much spoil.

Q. Did Benhadad make war again upon Israel?

A. The councillors of Syria advised their king to collect another army, equal in size to the one which had been defeated, and change the kings who before commanded their separate forces, for Syrian captains, who would be more obedient to discipline, and attack the Israelites upon the plains. By this arrangement they expected to gain two advantages. They knew their army was more fitted to combat on a plain than on hills. They also conceived of Jehovah as of their false gods, whose power they supposed was confined to certain districts. They thought Jehovah was a God of the hills, and not of the vallies.

Q. What message did Ahab receive at this time?

A. A prophet was sent to inform him that, because the Syrians had said that the Lord was God of the hills and not of the vallies, the whole army should fall before him. Ahab accordingly defeated the Syrians on the plains of Aphek, with a handful of men in comparison of the Syrian army. 27,000 thousand who escaped from the battle, perished by the fall of the city wall.

Q. What advantage did Ahab reap from this victory?

A. Very little; Benhadad sent his servants to him clothed in sackcloth, with ropes about their heads, in token of deep penitence for their guilt, beseeching for life: This extreme submission flattered Ahab's vanity; he forgot to give God the glory of his victory; he forgot the interests of Israel; but sent for Benhadad, and made a league with him, upon condition that he should restore all the cities which his father

had taken from Israel, and allow the Israelites to possess certain privileges in Damascus, which the Syrians enjoyed at Samaria.

Q. What reproof did Ahab receive for this transaction?

A. It appears from history, that Ahab had been commanded to cut off Benhadad and all his forces, as the enemy of God. The Lord, by a prophet, reproved him for his untimely lenity, and informed him that he should fall by the hands of the Syrians. This information filled Ahab's heart with sorrow, but neither the mercies nor the judgments of God produced real repentance.

Q. What sin was Ahab guilty of soon after this reproof?

A. Naboth, the Jezreelite, had a vineyard which lay near the palace of Ahab, and the king wished to purchase it to make an addition to his royal garden; but Naboth refused to part with it for any consideration. Naboth valued his vineyard as the inheritance of his fathers, originally assigned to them by the Lord; and which they were forbidden, by the law of Moses, to alienate. He gave Ahab the true reason why he could not comply with his request, for he would rather appear uncourteous to his prince, than transgress the law of God. Ahab, who had set his heart upon the possession of this field, was so vexed and disappointed at the refusal, that he went home sullen and discontented. Such was the conflict of his passions, that he lay down upon his bed, and refused to taste any food.

Q. What course did Jezebel pursue?

A. Having discovered the cause of her husband's uneasiness, she reproached him for suffering a subject to give him pain, and engaged to put him in immediate possession of the vineyard, if he would leave the management to her. Ahab gave her the royal signet, and she wrote letters in his name to the elders of Jezreel, to proclaim a fast, as if some great and wicked design had been discovered which threatened the city with divine judgment unless solemnly expiated; intending while the minds of men were agitated, to seize Naboth, and condemn him and his sons to death as dangerous to the kingdom.

Q. Did the elders of Jezreel consent to commit this horrid act?

A. As they were men raised to office by a wicked prince, they did not hesitate to execute the commission. Naboth, amidst the solemnity of the fast, was accused by false witnesses of blasphemy, and he and his sons condemned to be

stoned to death, and his estate confiscated to the public treasury.

Q. Did Ahab acquiesce in this infamous deed?

A. Ahab proved that he was pleased with the conduct of Jezebel and her agents, by readily going, in person, to take possession of the estate for which the murder had been committed.

Q. Did Ahab enjoy the fruits of his guilt?

A. When he went to take possession of the coveted spot of earth, he was met by the prophet Elijah, who came to him from God, and solemnly denounced the heavy judgments which should follow in consequence of this atrocious act of guilt. Ahab, who always shuddered at the presence of Elijah, was struck, at this time, with peculiar horror: he exclaimed, "hast thou found me, O mine enemy!" The prophet answered, "I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."

Q. What were the judgments denounced against Ahab?

A. That dogs should lick Ahab's blood where they had recently licked that of Naboth: that Jezebel should be devoured by them, and that all his posterity should be utterly exterminated.

Q. What effect had this awful prediction upon the mind of Ahab?

A. He was much affected at the time; he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, fasted, and shewed all the outward marks of penitence, except that he did not restore Naboth's vineyard to his heirs, or separate himself from his wicked queen. Though Ahab's humiliation was formal and hypocritical, yet, as it put outward honour upon the divine law, it was so far accepted by God, as to obtain a respite of the judgments, as far as it respected his family, until after his disease, and he was graciously spared the anguish of witnessing the slaughter of his children.

Q. Who governed the kingdom of Judah at this time?

A. Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, who succeeded his father in the 55th year of his age. [B. C. 954.] He gave convincing proofs of his piety and zeal in the worship of the true God, by demolishing the groves and idols which had escaped the vigilance of his father, and promoting the service of his Creator through his whole kingdom. That the true worship of God might be more permanently established in every family, Jehoshaphat appointed men of piety, and integrity, who were

of high rank, to go through the country and teach in every city, and expound the law of Moses to the people.

Q. Was Jehoshaphat attentive to the political interests of his kingdom?

A. He fortified all the frontier towns obtained by recent conquests; maintained an army which consisted of a million of valiant men, and discovered such depth of wisdom in all his actions, and possessed, in so eminent a degree, the protection of God, that the Arabians and Philistines voluntarily became his tributaries; and most of the adjacent nations sought his friendship and alliance.

Q. What faults are recorded of this wise and pious prince?

A. He is blamed by the sacred historian for not totally destroying the high places, and for suffering his son Jehoram to marry Athaliah, the ungodly daughter of Ahab.

Q. Was not Jehoshaphat also blameable for keeping such a large military force?

A. As he is not accused of oppressing his people, we may conclude that this military force served in rotation, and that most of them were employed in building the cities for defence, and other public business. Amaziah, one of his chief officers, is particularly mentioned for having offered himself, willingly to serve God as well as his country, and with him two hundred thousand men, whom we may suppose were employed in the service of the temple.

Q. What could have induced Jehoshaphat, who was pious and wise, to form an alliance with so wicked a prince as Ahab?

A. Probably, Ahab perceiving Jehoshaphat's prosperity, courted his alliance with great assiduity; and Jehoshaphat, whose prominent fault seems to have been a too great pliability of temper, yielded to his solicitations in hopes of forming a lasting union between Israel and Judah; but the connection was improper, and brought great danger upon Jehoshaphat, and evil upon Judah.

Q. What was the danger to which Jehoshaphat was exposed in consequence of this alliance?

A. Jehoshaphat having honoured Ahab with a visit in Samaria, he proposed that they should join their forces and recover Ramath in Gilead, from the king of Syria. This city was one of those which Benhadad had engaged to restore to Ahab, when he was a prisoner in Samaria, but having recovered his liberty, refused to perform the engagement.

Q. Did Jehoshaphat consent to accompany Ahab in this war?

A. He consented without hesitation; but before they engaged, proposed that Ahab should consult the Lord respecting the success of the proposed battle. Ahab immediately collected four hundred of his idolatrous prophets, who all commanded him to engage in the war, and promised him success. Jehoshaphat, suspecting that these men were not true prophets, though they made use of the name of the Lord, enquired if there were not a prophet of Jehovah by whom they might consult. Ahab replied that there was one named Micaiah, who was his enemy, and he therefore hated him, but to please Jehoshaphat, he would have him brought before them.

Q. What was the purport of Micaiah's prophecy?

A. Micaiah, being solemnly questioned in the name of the Lord, replied that the expedition would prove unfortunate to the troops, and fatal to their leaders, for God had permitted the other prophets to be deceived by a lying spirit in order to facilitate the execution of his judgments.

Q. Did Ahab pay any attention to this prophecy?

A. He was so greatly exasperated at Micaiah, that he ordered him to be confined in prison, and treated with great severity till his return, probably intending to put him to death as a false prophet; but being secretly alarmed at the solemnity of Micaiah's address, he seemed to desist from his enterprize. He desired Jehoshaphat to take the chief command of the army, while he would disguise himself, to avoid being known by the Syrians, who would aim particularly at his life.

Q. Was not Jehoshaphat deterred from engaging in battle after this solemn warning?

A. Jehoshaphat's silent connivance at Ahab's treatment of Micaiah, and his engaging in battle after this solemn warning, are proofs that too great pliability of temper may lead the best men into most criminal actions. Jehoshaphat took the command of the army as Ahab desired. When they came to an engagement, Benhadad ordered his troops to single out Ahab in the battle and fight only with him.

Q. Why was this command given?

A. It was not easy to conjecture the reason of so singular a command, which served to embarrass the enemy of Syria. Ahab had defeated Benhadad twice, and liberated him without ransom, when his prisoner; but this kindness could not

obliterate his subsequent disgrace, and he pursued Ahab with the most malignant hatred.

Q. Were the Syrians successful in discovering Ahab?

A. The officers of Benhadad, observing that Jehoshaphat had the chief command, supposed him to be the king of Israel, and turned all the force of the battle against him. Jehoshaphat being in extreme danger, cried unto God: upon which the Syrians perceiving that it was not Ahab, turned from him. Ahab, notwithstanding his precaution, could not escape the destined blow. An arrow shot by accident from an unknown hand, proved fatal to the infatuated king of Israel. After having his wound dressed, Ahab returned to the field of battle, and remained in his chariot during the rest of the engagement, which lasted until sunset, at which time he died. When Ahab's death was known, either Jehoshaphat or the generals who succeeded in command, blew a trumpet and commanded the people to return, every man to his own city. Thus the prophecy of Micaiah was fully completed, for all Israel was scattered like sheep without a shepherd.

Q. What became of the body of Ahab?

A. It was interred at Samaria. [B. C. 897.] The chariot in which he rode being covered with the blood of the deceased monarch, was taken to the pool of Samaria, together with his armour, and there washed, and the dogs licked the blood, as it ran from the chariot, according to the word of Elijah.

CHAP. XI.

The history of Carthage, Judah, and Israel, during the reign of Jehoshaphat,

Q. What became of Jehoshaphat after the battle?

A. He returned in safety to his own kingdom. On his return he was met by a prophet named Jehu, the son of Hanani, who was cast into prison for reproving his father Asa. Jehu reproved the king of Judah for contracting an alliance with a notorious idolater, and for undertaking an expedition in express defiance of God's commands, informing him that wrath was upon him from the Lord; not the wrath of an avenger, but the wrath of an offended father.

Q. Did Jehoshaphat receive this reproof as ungraciously as his father did that of Hanani?

A. No; he went no more to Samaria, but immediately set about correcting the irregularities which had began to appear in consequence of his intercourse with idolaters. Jehoshaphat made a circuit through his kingdom, correcting, not only the abuses in religion, but in the ordinary administration of justice. He established courts of justice in every considerable town, in which the Levites presided with the ordinary magistrates. The king visited each of these courts, and solemnly warned the judges to do the duty of their office in the fear of the Lord. "Ye do not judge," said he, "before the son's of men, but before the Word of the Lord, and his glorious presence resides among you in the act of judgment." When this settlement was completed, the king and his attendants returned to Jerusalem.

Q. What remarkable token of God's protection was shown to Jehoshaphat about this time?

A. A formidable host came against Jerusalem, composed of Ammonites, Moabites, and various distant nations. It is supposed this invasion took place soon after Jehoshaphat's return from Ramath, and that his enemies hearing that he had offended Jehovah, expected to succeed against him. The kingdom of Judah had enjoyed peace a long time, in consequence of which his military arrangements had been neglected, and Jehoshaphat was unprepared to resist so formidable an invasion; but trusting to the mercy of that God whom he had so recently offended, he proclaimed a national fast, and with his whole heart set himself to seek the Lord and humble himself for his own sins, and the sins of his people.

Q. What answer did God give to his supplication?

A. The spirit of the Lord informed the people by the mouth of a Levite, not to fear the mighty host of their enemies, for the battle was not their's, but God's. He commanded them to go forth the next day, not to fight, but to witness the salvation of Judah, from the Lord. Upon receiving this gracious assurance, Jehoshaphat bowed his head in humble adoration, and all Judah, with the inhabitants of Jerusalem, fell upon their faces, worshipping the Lord. The Levites joined with the king and people in songs of praise, as if the deliverance was already completed.

Q. In what manner were the enemies of Judah destroyed?

A. On the next day Jehoshaphat went forth to meet the enemy as he had been commanded. He seems not to have regarded the arrangement of his forces, for he so firmly believed the Lord's promise, that he marched forth as to a

triumph, not a battle. He exhorted his troops to place a firm reliance upon God's faithfulness. He caused singers to go before the army, to sing the beauty of holiness, and to praise the Lord for his mercy which endureth forever. When the song of praise began, the Lord sent a spirit of confusion into the armies of the different nations which were drawn up for battle, who fell upon each other, either through mistake or jealousy, till the slaughter became general. When Jehoshaphat arrived on the field of battle, he found his enemies lying dead in their camp. Jehoshaphat gave his people liberty to take the spoil of the enemy, which was immense. This invasion greatly enriched the kingdom of Judah, and made Jehoshaphat more respected by the heathen nations. On the fourth day after the battle, the king and all the inhabitants of Judah assembled at Jerusalem, and celebrated their bloodless victory, with solemn praises to God.

Q. Did Jehoshaphat have any further connection with the kings of Israel?

A. Yes; he again forgot the rebuke of the prophet, and formed a close friendship with Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, who had succeeded his father on the throne of Israel; they united in building ships for a mercantile expedition to Tarshish. Jehoshaphat was again reproved for this intimacy, and foretold that the ships should be broken and the expedition fail, which happened accordingly.

Q. What important city was founded during Jehoshaphat's reign?

A. Carthage, which was built on the coast of Africa, near the place where Tunis now stands.

Q. At what period is the foundation of this city placed?

A. About three hundred years after the destruction of Jewry. [B. C. 892.]

Q. By whom was it built?

A. By Dido, a Tyrian princess, who, to avoid the cruelty of her brother Pygmalion, fled with a numerous train of Phenicians, to Africa, where she laid the foundation of a mighty empire, which extended its dominions over a great extent of territory, in Africa, a part of Spain, and the principal islands in the Mediterranean Sea.

Q. What constituted the chief strength of Carthage?

A. Its fleet, its commerce; by these, its riches became immense. With their money, they were enabled to keep

large bodies of mercenary soldiers in their service, and to conquer without employing many of their citizens in war.

Q. What form of government existed in Carthage?

A. Republican; their chief magistrates were called *suffetes*, and were chosen annually. The government of Carthage, like that of Sparta and Rome, united three different authorities, which counterpoised and gave mutual assistance to each other, the *suffetes*, the senate, and the people,

Q. What power did the *suffetes* possess?

A. They assembled the senate, presided in all important debates, and frequently commanded armies.

Q. What number composed the senate, and how great was its power?

A. The number is not known, but it must have been too great for calm deliberation, as one hundred was selected from it to form a separate assembly. The senate was composed of persons venerable on account of their age, their birth, their riches, but especially their merit. In the senate all affairs of state were debated; ambassadors from foreign nations admitted to audience, and peace or war determined on. When the sentiments and votes of the senate were unanimous, there lay no appeal to the people. When there was a division in the senate, the question in debate was brought before the people, on whom the power of deciding thereby devolved. This regulation had a tendency to unite the senate; such a council would be naturally jealous of its authority, and not easily prevailed on to let it pass into the hands of the multitude. Ancient authors observe, that while the senate had the administration of affairs, the state was governed with great wisdom, and succeeded in all its enterprises.

Q. What was the council of the hundred?

A. A body composed of an hundred and four persons, chosen from the senate. This council had great authority, and was formed to curb the exorbitant power of popular generals, who, from having absolute authority in the field, endangered the public safety. By this institution, they were obliged to give an account of their actions when they returned from war. From this council, five were elected to particular power; a vacancy in their number, could be filled by none but themselves. They also chose the members who composed the council of the hundred. None were elected in this council of five, but persons of distinguished merit. No salary was annexed to this office, the authority

and honour conferred on its members being considered a sufficient reward.

Q. Had this council a salutary influence?

A. These judges, while they continued faithful in the discharge of their duty, were a terror to transgressors, and the great pillars of justice; but, in the course of time, they became so many petty tyrants.

Q. What other officers of justice had power in Carthage?

A. There were many; one had the same power as the censors at Rome, of inspecting the morals of the people.

Q. What great defects are found in the government of Carthage?

A. One person was allowed to possess too many offices at a time; by this defect business was not so well attended to, and jealousy, ambition, and envy, nourished in the bosoms of the aspiring. Riches, instead of merit, were too often recommended to public employments.

Q. From what sources was their wealth drawn?

A. From their commerce, which extended to all the known world. They made themselves lords of the ocean; they were the factors for every nation; the band which connected the east, west, and south, together, and the necessary channel of communication. Men of the highest rank were not ashamed of being merchants: they engaged in commerce with as much diligence and patience as the meanest citizen. Towards the close of their empire, the Carthaginians drew considerable wealth from their mines in Spain.

Q. Was Carthage a very warlike nation?

A. Carthage was a commercial, and at the same time a warlike republic. They drew the chief part of their forces from the neighbouring nations. From Numidia a bold and disciplined cavalry; from the Balearian isles, the most expert slingers in the world; from Spain, Geneva, and Gaul, a stout and invincible infantry; from Greece, soldiers skilled in all the arts of war. Carthage, by venal blood, possessed themselves of provinces and kingdoms, while their own citizens were left to pursue, undisturbed, the peaceable occupations of domestic life.

Q. Had not the Carthaginians any troops of their own?

A. Yes; a small body of native citizens, from which the officers of the army were chosen; they seldom employed any foreign officers, of whom they were very jealous, though they frequently continued their own generals, at the head

of the army, during life, if their conduct was pleasing to the republic.

Q. Was there no disadvantage in employing so many foreign troops?

A. Yes; they never fought with that resolution which native soldiers display. On the least reverse of fortune, they were ready to desert their standard, and join the enemy for a larger reward. Thus the Carthagenians considered the loss of a battle as certain ruin, and often found more danger from their own troops than the enemy.

Q. Were the Carthagenians fond of science?

A. They are not considered as a learned nation, though they produced several eminent characters. In general, the study of youth was confined to writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and the arts of merchandize. A poet, or a philosopher, was considered a prodigy at Carthage.

Q. What was the religion of Carthage?

A. They worshipped the same deities as the Greeks. Two deities were honoured with a more particular worship; the first was the goddess of Celestia, or the moon; she was invoked in great calamities, particularly in droughts, they considered her the giver of rain. The second deity, particularly adored at Carthage, was Moloch, or Saturn. To this demon they offered human sacrifices. Parents devoted their children to this deity; they were either burnt in a furnace, or caused to pass through fire, to the god, where they frequently perished. Mothers considered it their duty to devote their children with cheerfulness. In time of great calamity, great numbers were sacrificed at once.

Q. Does history relate any particulars of Dido's life?

A. She descended from Ithobal, king of Tyre, father of the famous Jezebel. She married Sicheus, a near relation, who was a very wealthy prince. Pygmalion, king of Tyre, brother to Dido, murdered Sicheus in order to get possession of his wealth. Dido found means to escape with all the wealth of her deceased husband to Africa, where she purchased land of the inhabitants to erect a city, which she named Carthage. Many of the neighbouring people repaired to Carthage to furnish the strangers with the necessaries of life, and soon after incorporated themselves with the citizens. The Carthagenians, at first, paid annual tribute to the Africans for the ground the city stood upon.

Q. Can you relate the death of Dido?

A. After she had been settled a short time in her new city, Jæbus, king of Mauritania, sent ambassadors to ask her in

marriage, and threatened to make war on her if she refused. The princess asked time for deliberation. She had sworn never to violate the vows made to Sicheus, by a second marriage. She was incapable of violating her faith, and did not wish to hazard the lives of her citizens by a dangerous war. To avoid these evils, she caused a pile to be erected to the memory of her husband, ascended it and drew a dagger, which she had concealed under her robe, stabbed herself, telling her subjects she was going where the fate of her city called her.

Q. Was there any memorable transaction during the reign of Ahaziah, king of Israel?

A. Ahaziah was a wicked prince. [B. C. 898.] In the second year of his reign, the Moabites revolted and refused to pay him tribute. Soon after this event, the king fell from a lattice in his upper chamber, and was dangerously hurt. Fearing a fatal effect from the accident, he sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, whether he should recover. Elijah the prophet was sent to reprove Ahaziah for public dishonour put upon the God of Israel. He met the messengers sent by the king, and, according to the commission he had received, asked them if there were no God in Israel, that they were going to inquire of Baalzebub, god of Ekron; informing them, in the name of the Lord, that their master should not come down from the bed on which he lay, but should surely die: on hearing this, the messengers returned to the king.

Q. How was he affected with the prediction?

A. Ahaziah inquired why they had returned so speedily. They replied, a prophet had met them and commanded them to return, and say unto the king, "is there no God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baalzebub, god of Ekron, therefore, thou shalt not come down from the bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die." The king then inquired, what sort of a person it was who had given them that message. They described his person and dress, and the king knew it must be Elijah. He sent a captain with fifty men to bring the prophet before him.

Q. What became of this captain and his company?

A. Elijah prayed to the Lord, who sent fire from heaven at his request, and destroyed the whole company. Ahaziah then sent another captain with the same number of men as the former, who were destroyed in the same manner as the first fifty. The king, unappalled by these awful tokens of God's anger, sent a third captain with his band of soldiers to seize the prophet. This captain, though he dared not dis-

bey the king's command, appears to have been one who feared God. He addressed the prophet in terms of respect and submission, and entreated for the lives of himself and his companions.

Q. Was this captain and his men spared?

A. Yes; Elijah being assured by an angel, that his life should be safe, went with this captain to the king, and confirmed the prophecy of his approaching death, which took place as he predicted.

Q. How can we reconcile these transactions with true piety?

A. Elijah was undoubtedly moved by immediate revelation from heaven, to call for fire to consume these idolatrous Hebrews. Had he been actuated by a spirit of revenge, God would not have permitted the miracle to take place. He had proved before this period that Jehovah was the true God, by calling fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice; yet the nation in general, and especially the rulers, adhered to the worship of Baal. It was, therefore, needful they should receive a more awful proof of Divine vengeance against their obstinate rebellion.

Q. Was this the last memorable act of Elijah?

A. It was; this great prophet, being informed God was about to remove him from the earth, sat out with Elisha to visit the schools of the prophets, and take leave of his brethren before his departure. Some of these schools were flourishing notwithstanding Jezebel's tyranny. Elisha, who accompanied his master through the whole tour, was alone permitted to witness his ascension.

Q. What request did Elisha make before Elijah's translation?

A. He desired a double portion of his spirit might rest upon him, which was granted, for he wrought many more miracles than Elijah.

Q. In what manner did Elijah leave the world?

A. He was taken both body and soul to heaven by a chariot and horses of fire. His mantle was left behind, as a token of the different state in which he existed, and a proof that Elisha was to be his successor.

Q. What is supposed to be the reason of Elijah's translation?

A. He was a faithful servant of God among a perverse and idolatrous people: [B. C. 896.] But the honour of his translation is not to be considered as arising solely from his own merit. He was, like Enoch, a type of Christ. Under every

dispensation, God saw fit to give a proof to the world of the resurrection of the body, and the ascension of both body and soul of the righteous to heaven.

Q. What miracles did Elisha perform on receiving Elijah's mantle?

A. He smote the waters of Jordan with it, saying, "where is the Lord God of Elijah?" The waters divided for him to pass over, as they had done a few hours before, at the voice of Elijah. He purified the unwholesome waters of Jericho. He cursed some children who insulted him as a servant of the Lord, upon which two bears came from a neighbouring wood, and tore forty-two of these young audacious sinners in pieces. By these miracles, the young prophets were convinced that God was with Elisha, as he had been with Elijah, and they submitted to his instruction and guidance.

Q. Who succeeded Ahaziah?

A. His brother Jehoram. [B. C. 882.] This prince prevailed on Jehoshaphat to assist him against the Moabites, who had rebelled and refused to pay tribute in the preceding reign.

Q. What remarkable event occurred in this war?

A. The confederate armies took a compass of seven day's march through the desert of Edom, in hopes of surprising the enemy; but they were disappointed. The Moabites had discovered their intentions, and assembled a powerful army to oppose them. Jehoram's army was greatly distressed for the want of water.

Q. How were they relieved from their distress?

A. Jehoshaphat enquired for a prophet of the Lord, and was informed that Elisha was in the camp. Jehoshaphat was acquainted with his character, and proposed consulting him immediately. The kings of Israel and Edom, who knew the power of Jehovah, though they did not love his laws, consented to consult the prophet, to learn how they might procure relief in their imminent danger. These three kings honoured the prophet by waiting on him, instead of sending for him to their pavilion. Elisha reproved the king of Israel for his idolatry, and assured him that were it not for the presence of Jehoshaphat, he would not intercede with God for him. He then commanded a minstrel to be brought before him; having solemnized his mind by a hymn of praise to God, he received a prophetic promise and commandment how to proceed on this trying occasion.

Q. What was the command and promise?

A. The army was commanded to dig a multitude of

ditches in the dry valley where they were encamped. Elisha informed them, in the name of the Lord, that, without wind or rain, they should be filled with water at the time of the morning sacrifice at Jerusalem. Shewing, by this miracle, that relief was granted to them, not for their sake, but through the prayers of the true worshippers of God. He also informed them that God would grant them a complete victory over the Moabites.

Q. Did these events take place according to Elisha's prediction?

A. At the time of the morning sacrifice, there came a flood of water, by the way of Edom, and the whole country was inundated. The Moabites, who were encamped on the borders of their kingdom, observed the water, which from the reflection of the morning sun, appeared red like blood, and knowing the place to be a dry valley, supposed their enemies had quarrelled with each other, and the plain was filled with their blood. Being greatly elated, they came on in perfect security to spoil the camp, and were easily destroyed.

Q. Did not this signal deliverance reclaim Jehoram?

A. It does not appear that it had any lasting effect on the king of Israel. But we may hope that many persons, both of Israel and Edom, were savingly convinced, and brought to worship the true God.

Q. What other miracles were wrought by Elisha?

A. He increased a pot of oil belonging to a prophet's widow, till it was sufficient to pay her numerous debts, and maintain herself and two sons, which teaches us that the widows and children of those who spend their lives in the service of God, will be provided for by him, if they rely, in faith, upon his promises. Elisha also promised a son to the Shunamite woman who entertained him, because he was a prophet of the Lord, and who, before had no child. He also raised this son to life again when he died. His fame spread to foreign nations; and Naaman, one of the chief lords of Syria, came to him to be healed of his leprosy.

Q. Will you relate some of the circumstances of his cure?

A. The king of Syria supposing the prophet to be under the direction of Jehoram, sent Naaman to him with a large retinue and costly presents, intreating him, as a peculiar favour, that he would restore his servant to health. Jehoram was greatly alarmed at the message, supposing Benhadad intended to provoke a quarrel by this demand, which he considered as impossible to comply with, as to raise the dead. Elisha, hearing of the king's perplexity, desired that Naaman

might be sent to him, that the Syrians might know there was a prophet in Israel. When Naaman came to Elisha's house, and stood, with all his retinue, before the door, Elisha sent a messenger to him, commanding him to wash himself seven times in the river Jordan, and he should be restored to health. Naaman was very angry that so slight a thing was appointed for his cure, and was about returning without making the experiment, but his servants, who were wiser than their master, persuaded him to obey the prophet. Naaman, accordingly, washed himself as directed, and his flesh became perfectly sound, and as pure as the flesh of a healthy child.

Q. What effect did this miracle produce upon Naaman's heart?

A. He immediately returned to the prophet, and acknowledged that the God of Israel was the only true God. So great was his veneration for every thing that belonged to Israel, he desired leave to carry home earth sufficient to erect an altar to Jehovah in his own country, declaring that he would never worship any other God. He also requested Elisha to accept a present from him in token of his gratitude; Elisha decidedly refused. But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, followed after Naaman, and begged, in his master's name, that he would give him two talents of silver, and two changes of raiment, for two young prophets who had come to him unexpectedly. Naaman, with great readiness, complied, and even pressed him to accept of a larger sum than he petitioned for. This money, which amounted to several hundred pounds sterling in silver, Gehazi secreted in some convenient place, and then returned to Elisha, who demanded where he had been, and he denied that he had been out.

Q. What reproof did Elisha give him for his treachery and falsehood?

A. Elisha informed Gehazi that the spirit of God had disclosed to him his treachery and falsehood. He asked him if, in the low condition of his country and religion, it was a time to receive garments, and plant olive yards, and vineyards. He then declared that the leprosy of Naaman was entailed on him and his posterity forever. The curse immediately took effect; before Gehazi left the prophet's presence he became a leper as white as snow.

Q. Were these the only miracles performed by Elisha?

A. No; he performed many more. He made the iron head of an ax float on the water, that a poor young prophet, who had borrowed it, might restore it to the owner. He discovered the king of Syria's private counsels to the king of

Israel, and by that means preserved him from the ambushments laid by the Syrians.

Benhadad, who had been frequently frustrated in his attempts to surprize the Israelites, suspected that he had a traitor in his privy council; but his servants informed him that no treachery was attached to them, but that Elisha the prophet informed the king of Israel of their most secret designs. Benhadad, whose heart was hardened by pride and unbelief, supposed he had power to get possession of the prophet's person, and sent a large force to take him. They came by night and encompassed the city of Dothan where the prophet then resided. Elisha's servant, very early in the morning, discovered the host of the Syrians, and was greatly alarmed. Elisha bid him not fear, for they had guards more powerful than the enemy. He then prayed that God would open the eyes of his young servant, whose vision was instantly strengthened, and he beheld a mighty host of angels encamped around Elisha. The prophet, secure in Divine protection, went forth to the Syrian army. He prayed that God would blind the eyes of the Syrians, or rather give them a false vision. The prophet then told them this was not the right city, but if they would follow him he would lead them to the man whom they sought; and they were so infatuated, that they suffered him to lead them to Samaria.

Q. How were they treated in Samaria?

A. When they had arrived in the city, God, at the prophet's intercession, restored their sight. Jehoram inquired if he should destroy them. Elisha forbade him to injure them, as they were in the same condition as prisoners of war. He then commanded, and they gave the Syrians a splendid entertainment, and dismissed them.

Q. Did not these repeated miracles deter the Syrians from invading Israel?

A. For a time the Syrians were overawed, and ceased from their usual depredations; yet, not long after, Benhadad collected his whole force, and besieged Samaria. The country was, at the same time, afflicted with famine. The city of Samaria was greatly distressed, the inhabitants reduced to the last stages of famine, fed on the dead carcasses of unclean animals; an asses head was sold for about ten pounds, and twelve shillings was given for a small measure of very mean pulse, called dove's dung.

As the king was passing through the city, a woman cried to him for redress. The king, in a peevish manner, inquired how he could help her in this day of extremity. The distressed woman, pointed to one of her companions and said,

this woman promised if I would give my son to preserve our lives yesterday, she would give her son to day; so I gave my son, and we boiled and eat him; I said to her, give thy son this day, that we may eat him, but she hath hid her son. The king, on hearing this dreadful tale, rent his clothes, and assumed the garments of a penitent. But his repentance was not of the heart, for instead of renouncing his idols and reforming his people, he sought to slay Elisha.

Q. Why did the king seek to slay the prophet?

A. Wicked rulers are unwilling to have any part of public calamity imputed to them. Elisha had, probably, denounced this judgment for the sins of Jehoram; or, the king thought the prophet might, by his prayers, have obtained relief. His rage was really exerted against God, whom he intended to wound in the person of his prophet. Elisha found means to elude his anger, and assured him that, on the next day, there should be an abundant supply of provision in Samaria. A lord, on whose arm the king leaned, expressed his unbelief of the prophet's prediction, and Elisha informed him that he should see it with his eyes, but should not taste thereof.

Q. Was this supply obtained?

A. God caused the host of the Syrians to hear, in the night, a sound like that of chariots, horses, and armed men, rushing upon them from abroad. They supposed that Jehoram had hired the forces of Egypt, and other nations, to assist him. They were filled with fear and amazement: so great was the terror which seized upon them, they fled in the utmost confusion, without even stopping to mount their horses; and four lepers, who lodged on the outside of the gate, being led, by hunger, to the Syrian camp, found the tents full of baggage and provision, but totally abandoned by the soldiers. They returned and informed the king of what they had seen. The king was, at first, apprehensive of an ambush, and sent out two horsemen to inspect the country. They found the enemy had really retreated, by the garments which they had cast off in their flight. The Israelites were enriched by the enemy's spoil, and the famine turned into extraordinary plenty, as Elisha had predicted. The nobleman who had ventured to ridicule the idea of such a circumstance, being appointed by the king to superintend the gate, was trampled to death by the eager multitude, as Elisha had foretold.

Q. Were these repeated acts of Divine power and goodness followed by any reformation in Israel?

A. Both king and people were so hardened in idolatry as to forget both the mercies and judgments of God. The country, in consequence of their guilt, was visited with a second famine. Elisha was warned of its approach, and counselled his benefactress, the Shunamite (who was now a widow) to remove till it was over. Elisha, also took refuge in Damascus.

Q. How was the prophet treated in that city?

A. With the utmost respect. Benhadad, who was sick, sent Hazael, his chief minister, with a costly present to him to inquire if his disease would prove mortal.

Q. What answer did the prophet return?

A. He informed Hazael that his disease was not mortal, yet he would surely die. Then fixing his eyes on the minister with an intense regard, he burst into tears. Hazael inquired the cause of his grief; the prophet informed him he foresaw the calamities which his countrymen would experience from his hand, and particularized several acts of barbarity which he would commit.

Q. How did Hazael receive this intelligence?

A. His heart was not yet hardened by power, and he expressed the utmost abhorrence of the deeds foretold; asked if the prophet thought him a dog fierce for prey, rather than a rational being. The prophet then informed him he would be king over Syria.

Q. Was not Hazael anointed before this by Elijah?

A. It is not certain whether he had been anointed by Elijah; some suppose Elisha anointed him at this time. He being anointed as future king, did not authorize him to kill his master. Being assured of the kingdom, his ambition brooked no delay, and he was determined to murder his sovereign, which he effected without suspicion, and succeeded to the throne.

CHAP. XII.

The history of Judah, Israel, and Greece, from the death of Jehoshaphat, to the reign of Amaziah.

Q. What was the state of Judah at this time?

A. The face of affairs was greatly changed at Jerusalem. [B. C. 898.] Jehoram, the son of the pious Jehoshaphat, had

succeeded his father. Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, brought impiety along with her into the kingdom of Judah. Jehoram, instigated by her councils, forsook the service of God, and obliged the people to worship in high places. He slew all his brethren, and several of the magistrates who were obnoxious to him, either on account of their popularity, or piety. Yet the Lord would not destroy him and his house, on account of the covenant made with David; yet he punished him with great severity.

Q. What was the punishment he received?

A. The Edomites revolted from under his government, and became an independent nation. He raised other powerful enemies, who came against Jerusalem, and slew all his sons except the youngest, who was secreted. After this, God smote him with a loathsome and painful disease, of which he died. These events had been predicted to him in a letter, written either by Elijah before his translation, or by Elisha, which made the punishment more conspicuous.

Q. Who succeeded him?

A. His son Ahaziah, who was the only remaining of all his children.

Q. How did Ahaziah reign?

A. Very badly; he was ruled entirely by his mother. The only act recorded of him, is a war in which he engaged with Jehoram, king of Israel, to recover Ramoth Gilead from Hazael, king of Syria. They succeeded in taking the city, but Jehoram received a dangerous wound in the attack, and was obliged to leave the city to the care of Jehu, one of his captains, and retired to Jezreel to be healed. Ahaziah accompanied him.

Q. What commission did Elisha receive at this time?

A. He was commanded to anoint Jehu, king over Israel. He accordingly sent a young prophet privately to Ramoth to anoint Jehu, and give him instructions to execute divine vengeance on Ahab's ungodly family.

Q. Did Jehu execute his commission immediately?

A. Jehu, having received this important message, acquainted his companions with his unexpected elevation, rode with all speed to Jezreel, and slew Jehoram at the vineyard for which Naboth had lost his life. The king of Judah was also involved in Jehoram's fate. Jezebel was thrown from a window in the palace, and trodden under foot by the horsemen; and afterward devoured by dogs. Jehu also wrote letters to the governors of Samaria, who had seventy of Ahab's descendants under their protection, desiring them to choose one of

the number for their king, and prepare to defend him by their arms.

Q. Did these governors elect a king?

A. No: they determined to sacrifice Ahab's descendants rather than incur Jehu's resentment. Jehu finding them fit instruments for his vengeance, commanded them to send all the heads of the young princes to him, in baskets, the next morning. On receiving this horrid present, he appeared at the gate of Jezreel, to remind the people of God's denunciation against the house of Ahab, and to justify his conduct.

Q. What was the next act of Jehu?

A. After he had destroyed all the kindred of Ahab that were found in Jezreel, he went to Samaria; on his way he met a number of men who were the kinsmen of Ahaziah, and consequently of the house of Ahab. Jehu inquired where they were going; they replied, that they came to salute Jehoram, and their own king Ahaziah, for they knew not that he had slain them both. Jehu considered them included within his commission, and gave orders to have them slain. The number which fell at this time was forty-two.

Q. Did Jehu pretend that all these acts of blood were sanctioned by zeal for religion?

A. He did; he imposed upon an old friend named Jehonadab, who was remarkable for his strict piety and zeal for the worship of God. Having heard that Jehu was executing the predicted vengeance on the house of Ahab, he entertained hopes of a thorough reformation, and was desirous of giving his cordial support to so good a work. Jehu was pleased to have the concurrence of so pious a man in his work of blood; he affected great zeal for the honour of God, and persuaded Jehonadab that it was his hatred of idolatry which induced him to proceed to such extremities. Jehonadab, believing him to be sincere, accepted his invitation, and accompanied him in his chariot to Samaria.

Q. What did he perform there?

A. Immediately on his arrival at Samaria, he sought out all Ahab's kindred, and slew them. He then pretended great zeal for the worship of Baal. He desired that all the worshippers of that god might be collected, for he intended to offer him a more costly sacrifice than Ahab had ever offered; and threatened any priest, or prophet of Baal, with death, if he absented himself from the feast.

Q. Were the worshippers of Baal imposed upon by this artifice?

A. The kings of Israel, who had seized upon the throne by

murdering their predecessors, had commonly imitated, or exceeded, their idolatry. The followers of Baal, without any hesitation, assembled for his worship. Jehu then commanded to give all the priests vestments; and when they had received them, he went into the house of Baal with his friend Jehonadab, and gave orders to make a strict search that no stranger, or any one of a different religion, should partake of their sacred office. When he found that all the worshippers of Baal, and none other were present, he gave orders for the sacrifice to begin, and while they were intent upon their idolatrous worship, they were all slain by the command of Jehu. He burnt the images and the temple of Baal. The citizens, from this time, made a practice of carrying all the filth and rubbish of Samaria to the place where the temple stood, in contempt and abhorrence of the idolatry once practised there.

Q. Did Jehu restore the true worship of Jehovah?

A. No; he permitted the Israelites to worship the golden calves which had been set up in Bethel and Dan, by Jeroboam: for this God punished him severely by the hands of the Syrians, who, under Hazael, committed those barbarities predicted by Elisha. Jehu reigned twenty-eight years, [B. C. 356.] But his actions were of so little importance, they are not recorded. We may suppose that the miseries of Israel were very great during his reign, and that he was personally punished for his hypocrisy; notwithstanding, his posterity, to the fourth generation, were continued on the throne, in recompence of his fidelity in destroying the wicked house of Ahab, and the worship of Baal.

Q. Who took possession of the throne of Judah upon the death of Ahaziah?

A. Athaliah, his mother, slew all the descendants of the house of David, even her own grand-children, except one who was saved from her revengeful ambition. Joash, the youngest son of Ahaziah, was stolen by his aunt Jehosheba; she carried him to her husband Jehoiada, who was the high priest. Jehoiada concealed the young prince in the temple six years, during which time Athaliah reigned over the kingdom of Judah, and, like a genuine daughter of Jezebel, established the worship of Baal at Jerusalem.

Q. Did the people submit peaceably to her government?

A. They were so degenerate they made no resistance, till Jehoiada informed the elders of Judah their lawful sovereign was alive, and taking them into the temple, presented him to them. Joash was immediately proclaimed king with universal shouts of joy, and Athaliah slain. [B. C. 878.]

Q. Will you give me an account of the state of Greece?

A. The Greeks had began to cultivate the fine arts. Hesiod, and after him Homer, had written those beautiful poems which, even to this day, are admired. In them we may behold the primitive manners of ancient nations. About this time Lycurgus gave those famous laws to Sparta, which are still the admiration of the world.

Q. Who was Lycurgus?

A. He was the son of Eumenes, king of Sparta, who was killed in an insurrection. After the death of his eldest brother he ascended the throne; but his brother's widow gave birth to a son, whom Lycurgus proclaimed king.

Q. Could not Lycurgus have retained the power himself?

A. Yes; he might have done it, for his brother's widow informed him, if he would marry her, she would destroy her offspring before it saw the light. Lycurgus detested the treachery, and by his artful conduct preserved the child. This disinterested action secured him the hearts of the nation, and prepared the way for the establishment of his laws.

Q. What was the situation of Sparta at this period?

A. For about nine hundred years, two princes of the race of Heraclidae, jointly occupied the throne. This divided royalty, was a source of perpetual dissensions, and tore in pieces a kingdom which was unprovided with wholesome laws. Lycurgus lamented the misery of his country. He visited foreign nations to learn their customs and laws, and having collected what he thought most beneficial to his country, he, partly by force, and partly by persuasion, induced the Spartans to adopt them.

Q. What were the most considerable of Lycurgus' laws?

A. Without banishing royalty, he created a mixed government, where three powers mutually balanced each other. He left little to the kings except the command of the armies, and the respect which was attached to the throne. He established a senate, consisting of twenty-eight members, beside the two kings, to counterbalance the influence of the princes and the people; so that royal authority might not degenerate into tyranny, nor popular liberty into rebellion.

Q. What was the particular duty of the senate?

A. To examine and propose the business of the state, which the people had a right to approve or reject, and, of course, were masters of the legislative power. The senators were chosen for life, and therefore did not stand in awe of the multitude.

Q. What were the Ephori?

A. A council chosen by the people annually; it consisted of five members, they had power to displace, imprison, or even put to death, any of the senators. Their formidable authority extended even to their kings, whom they might arrest and suspend from their office, till an oracle gave orders for their being replaced. This council was established about 130 years after Lycurgus.

Q. How was property distributed?

A. To banish both poverty and riches, two fatal sources of corruption, all property was held in common. The lands were equally divided. Instead of gold and silver money, Lycurgus substituted iron, which was excessively unwieldy, and could be of no value out of Sparta. He prohibited all the arts which contributed to pleasure and luxury, ordering the floors of their houses to be made only with a hatchet, and the doors with a saw. In short, he made riches, and all the arts of polished life contemptible; but found means, in the midst of general poverty, to prevent any individual from being in real want.

Q. What was the use of these severe restrictions?

A. They banished covetousness, fraud, injustice, voluptuousness, and effeminacy from the country, and rendered Lacedæmonia like one family. The citizens eat together at public tables, and subsisted on the coarsest fare. Here the aged instructed the young, who were particularly taught silence, submission to their superiors, to speak the truth, and to keep a secret inviolable.

Q. Was this the only education the Spartan youth received?

A. No; the children, who were born with a robust constitution, were committed to nurses chosen by the magistrates, and every thing that could render them hardy and fearless, was attended to with care. At the age of seven, they were given up to public masters, formed into classes, where they were all taught to discharge the same duties. They were accustomed to bear pain and fatigue, and to distinguish themselves by military arts, or robust exercise. Those who particularly distinguished themselves, commanded the rest, but always in presence of the elders, who were constantly attentive to reprove and correct them. No action was looked upon as indifferent; even their amusements were exercises of virtue and courage.

To habituate them early to the stratagems of war, they were taught to steal from the public tables, but if they were

so inexperienced as to be discovered in the act, they were severely chastised. The Spartan manners justified this practice, otherwise it must have been a folly, or a dangerous vice.

Q. The robust children were publicly educated; what became of the infirm?

A. They were exposed to death, that they might have none but firm or healthy citizens. This practice was both barbarous and impolitic, weakly children often making the most careful members of society.

Q. What other instances of cruelty were the Spartans guilty of?

A. In order to accustom their children to endure pain, they scourged them, sometimes even to death, at the altar of Diana, without their even daring to utter a complaint; mothers looking on unmoved. The Spartan women prided themselves on receiving, with transport, the news of their sons dying nobly in the field of battle. They also treated their helotes, or slaves, with great rigour, making them drunk to inspire their children with horror of the vice. If any helot distinguished himself in the field, or was admired for his size or mien, they put him to death as an enemy of the state. These barbarities cannot be imputed to Lycurgus. They began after pride and jealousy had corrupted the Spartan virtue.

Q. How were women educated?

A. They were taught the manly exercises, but modesty and decorum were unknown at Sparta. In the first ages of their history, they are represented as inspiring the young men with a love of heroic deeds; but in the last ages of the republic, the Spartan women degenerated, and were considered a disgrace to the Grecian name?

Q. How did the Spartans spend their leisure hours in time of peace?

A. All speculative sciences and mechanical arts were prohibited. In time of peace the citizens spent their lives in hunting, and other exercises, or in useful conversations.

Their lives have been condemned as too idle, and they are accused of rustic ignorance; yet while they retained the virtuous simplicity, and the severe discipline introduced by Lycurgus, they found sufficient employment for the most ardent mind; for in a free and virtuous state, the affairs of the public become the concern of every individual. They did not entirely neglect the cultivation of the mind. They attended to that kind of philosophy which, without being

either subtle or verbose, forms the judgment, and corrects the morals.

The Spartans loved poetry as a means of kindling the soul to virtue, and animating them with a desire of performing noble actions.

Q. Were the institutions of Lycurgus calculated to form a great nation?

A. They were not; Lacedemon was a small state, surrounded by powerful neighbours. Lycurgus designed to form a warlike and invincible republic, which should be able to withstand corruption at home, and assaults from abroad. Persuaded that Sparta could not be truly happy, but by being satisfied with liberty and poverty; repelling its enemies without a desire for dominion or conquest; he commanded them to wage no war but in self defence; not to pursue a vanquished enemy, or carry off their spoils; and to keep no fleet, lest they should be tempted to range the seas. He also excluded them from intercourse with strangers, unless they possessed some talent worthy of being received at Lacedemon.

Q. Were these regulations followed for any length of time?

A. The Spartans remained submissive to the greater part of these regulations for about five hundred years.

Q. How should we estimate Spartan laws, and Spartan virtue?

A. We are not to consider them as a perfect model. Spartan austerity, carried to excess, presents to our view some objects shocking to humanity. It stifled pity and the natural affections, those valuable sentiments which are the sweetest bond of social life. Had they tempered their severe virtues with gentleness, modesty, and humanity, they would have been entitled to higher encomiums. Their contempt of riches, their love of glory, and of their country; their obedience to the laws, and their heroic courage, have ranked them above all other heathen nations. They had, in general, that greatness of soul which made Pedareus rejoice when he was rejected from being one of the council of three hundred, and say, "*he was happy that Sparta had found three hundred citizens better than himself.*"

Q. What attention did the Spartans pay to religion?

A. They were less superstitious than their neighbours. All the statues of their deities, even that of Venus, were clothed in armour, that religion might promote the great design of the legislator, which was to render the nation war-

like. Long prayers were forbidden; they only asked of the gods to favour the deserving. Their sacrifices and offerings were of little value. They used no pomp at funerals; all their religious acts seemed directed by a practical philosophy.

Q. At what time was this famous republic founded?

A. About eight hundred and seventy-eight years before the Christian æra, if we date its foundation from the institutions of Lycurgus.

Q. What method did Lycurgus take to preserve his statutes inviolable?

A. It is said he went to consult the oracle of Delphos whether his laws were good; but, before he left Sparta, he made the inhabitants swear to obey them till his return. The oracle confirmed his laws, and declared that, by obeying them, Sparta would become the most famous city in the world. He then put an end to his life by abstaining from food, and thus left the Spartans bound by the oath they had sworn.

Q. Was the death of Lycurgus followed by any memorable event?

A. Nothing of importance is related of the Spartans till the Messenian war, in which the Spartans began to deviate from the laws of Lycurgus. They had two wars with the Messenians, who, after performing incredible acts of valour, were entirely defeated and reduced to slavery; a few only escaped with Aristomenes, their gallant leader, and took refuge in Sicily. [B. C. 739.]

Q. Can you relate some of the exploits attributed to Aristomenes?

A. He overcame the Spartans in several engagements; so that the Lacedæmonians, quite dispirited, had thoughts of concluding a peace on any terms. The Lacedæmonians, at the command of an oracle, sent to Athens for a general, who sent them a poet named Tyrtæus. This poet, by his songs and orations in praise of military glory, so inflamed their ardour, they resolved on another battle, in which they were victorious. Aristomenes was soon after taken prisoner in a skirmish, with fifty of his followers. Contrary to the laws of war, he was condemned to be thrown into a deep dungeon, which had been used for the execution of malefactors, and his fifty soldiers with him. They were all killed by the fall except Aristomenes, who saved himself by his shield. In this dreadful situation, he lay among the dead and mouldering carcases; when about midnight he heard a noise, and

perceived a wild beast which had come to feed on the dead bodies. He seized the tail of the animal, which being frightened, made its escape through a hole under ground, through which Aristomenes also escaped. After this extraordinary deliverance, he joined his troops, and again spread terror through the Spartan host. His single valour could not save his country, although he had thrice earned the Hecatomphonia, a sacrifice due to those who had killed one hundred of the enemy, hand to hand, in battle. During eleven years, Aristomenes defended the fortress of Eira, against the enemy. The Lacedæmonians gained possession of the place at last by treachery. As soon as it was known that the enemy had entered the city, Aristomenes, accompanied by a few warlike companions, endeavoured to animate the citizens to defend to the last extremity, the little spot of ground to which they could yet apply the endearing name of country. Such, however, was the confusion of the night, the darkness being rendered more doleful by a violent tempest of thunder, it was impossible to form the Messenians into such order as to make them act in concert. When the morning appeared, they saw the impossibility of defending the place. They determined, at every hazard, to attack and penetrate the Spartan battalions. Even the women armed themselves with tiles, stones, and every weapon which presented itself to their fury. For three days and nights they withstood the combined force of Sparta; at length, overcome with cold, sleep, fatigue, and hunger, they were obliged to give way. When Aristomenes found that Eira must be abandoned, he resolved to save its remaining citizens. In order to preserve them, he sounded a retreat. Having collected, into one body, such of the soldiers as were not already too far engaged with the Spartans, he placed the women and children in the centre of the battallion; they marched towards the enemy; Aristomenes conducted the van, and his son the rear. The Spartans, directed by Hecateus the divine, did not oppose their progress, but opened their ranks and allowed them to pass unhurt.

Q. Where did Aristomenes conduct them?

A. They took refuge in Arcadia. The inhabitants, when they heard of their unhappy condition, travelled in great numbers to the frontiers of their kingdom, carrying with them clothing and food for the suffering exiles. They invited them to their cities, and offered to divide their lands with them, and to give their daughters in marriage to such as had no wives.

Q. What project was formed by Aristomenee against Sparta?

A. In conjunction with the Arcadians, he proposed to make an attack upon the city of Sparta, while most of its inhabitants were employed in plundering Eira. The project was revealed to the Spartans by Aristoclates, king of Arcadia, who had by his treachery, on a former occasion, caused the Messenians to be defeated. The Arcadians, on discovering this second act of treachery, which defeated all their hopes, stoned to death the perfidious traitor, who disgraced the name of king.

Q. How did Joash reign in Jerusalem?

A. As long as Jehoiada lived to direct his youth, he reigned wisely, and caused the law of Moses to be strictly observed. He also repaired the temple, and beautified the city. But after the death of that good priest, who lived to the age of 130 years, being corrupted by the flattery of his courtiers, he forsook the worship of God, and gave himself, with the chief of Judah, to the abominations of idolatry.

Q. Did Joash ever repent of his idolatry?

A. In consequence of this apostasy, several prophets were raised up to rebuke the unthinking multitude. Zechariah, the high priest, boldly reprov'd both the king and his nobles; but all their remonstrances proved ineffectual, and the pious son of Jehoiada, was stoned to death in the very court of the temple, where the ungrateful Joash had been preserved.

Q. Did this ingratitude remain unpunished?

A. No; Hazael, king of Syria, led a numerous army into Judea, which pillaged the temple and metropolis of their choicest treasures, and made a dreadful slaughter among those nobles, who had been the first authors of the defection. Joash escaped the fate of his counsellors, by yielding up his riches to the invaders. He was soon after smitten with a sore disease, and was murdered by his own servants, in the fortieth year of his reign.

Q. Who succeeded Jehu on the throne of Israel?

A. His son Jehoahaz, who followed the impious conduct of his predecessors. He paid so little attention to the divine commands, that God chastised him severely by the hand of the Syrians. His actions, during a reign of seventeen years, were of so little importance, the sacred historian has passed them over in silence.

Q. Who succeeded him?

A. His son Joash, who bore the same name with the king of Judah, who had now reigned thirty-seven years.

Q. How did this king govern ?

A. He appeared, at first, like a good man. Soon after his ascension he paid a visit to Elisha the prophet, who was now on his death bed. Joash lamented the loss that he and his people were about to sustain, calling him the defence of Israel. Elisha comforted him, and bade the king bend a bow that was brought him. When the king had prepared the bow, Elisha took hold of his hands and bade him discharge the arrows. He then directed him to smite upon the ground: the king smote three times. The prophet reproved him for want of faith, and told him, had he smitten a number of times, he should have completely destroyed his enemies, but now he would gain but three victories over the Syrians.

Q. Was there any thing remarkable in Elisha's death ?

A. The circumstances of his death are not mentioned. But soon after his interment the hands of Moab invaded the land. The Israelites were attending the funeral of a young man, when they perceived the approach of the enemy. Struck with consternation, they flung the body into Elisha's sepulchre. As soon as the corpse touched the bones of the prophet, it received new life, arose and walked.

Q. What are we taught by this extraordinary miracle ?

A. That Elisha was as much beloved by God as Elijah, though he passed through the gates of death. It also intimated the immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body. It might also signify that many mercies were yet in store for Israel in consequence of Elisha's prayers.

Q. What memorable transactions occurred during the reign of Joash ?

A. Hazael, king of Syria, died and was succeeded by his son Benhadad. During his reign, Joash gained three victories over the Syrians, as was predicted by Elisha. These victories were not granted from any reformation in Joash, or his subjects, but from the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God still bore with his backsliding people. Joash also gained a victory over Amaziah, king of Judah, who succeeded the throne of Judah in the second year of Joash, king of Israel.

CHAP. XIII.

The history of Israel and Judah, and the neighbouring nations, from the reign of Amaziah, to the death of Ahaz.

Q. What was the character of Amaziah?

A. In the beginning of his reign he appeared like a man of true piety. He punished those persons who had murdered his father, but he did not execute their children, as had been too often done by former kings, but obeyed the laws of Moses which expressly prohibited the punishment of the children for the sins of their fathers.

Q. What occasioned the war between Amaziah and Joash?

A. Amaziah collected all the forces of his kingdom to make war upon Edom. He also hired a body of Israelites to serve in his army. A prophet informed him if he employed those idolatrous Israelites he should be defeated; but if he employed the men of Judah only, he should gain a complete victory. Amaziah regretted the money he had already paid them. The prophet assured him that if he obeyed God, his loss would be fully recompensed. Amaziah dismissed the Israelites, who were much incensed at the disgrace, and indulged their resentment by destroying the cities of Judah through which they passed. After Amaziah had conquered the Edomites, and gained immense spoil, he took also a great number of captives, whom he cruelly murdered. Being puffed with pride, he thought himself able to cope with Israel, and revenge the depredations made upon Judah by the auxiliaries which he had dismissed. He therefore sent a challenge to Joash to meet him in the field, and try their strength in a pitched battle.

Q. What answer did Joash return to this challenge?

A. He compared Amaziah to the thistle which sought an alliance with the cedar of Lebanon, but while he was making the arrogant demand, a wild beast passing along, trod down the thistle. By this fable he intended to reprove Amaziah's pride, and warn him not to engage in an unequal war.

Q. Was Amaziah deterred by this arrogant message?

A. No; he was rather stimulated to engage in battle. His heart was corrupted by success; he had forsaken the worship of God, and had set up idols in Jerusalem. God, therefore, gave him up to the delusions of his own vain mind.

He was defeated and taken captive. Jerusalem fell into the hands of Joash, who demolished its fortifications; and plundered, not only the king's palace, but the sacred vessels of the temple. He then released Amaziah, who reigned about fifteen years longer, but did not regain the love of his subjects, and he was finally slain in an open revolt.

Q. How long did Joash reign?

A. He died soon after the pillage of Jerusalem, having reigned sixteen years. His son Jeroboam succeeded him.

Q. What was the character of Jeroboam the 2d?

A. He was a very wicked man, yet he was made an instrument, by God, of restoring the kingdom to its pristine splendour. He was encouraged to that glorious work by the prophets Jonas and Hosea. He defeated the Syrians in several engagements, made himself master of their capital, and recovered all the territory which belonged to Israel in the days of Joshua. But though his reign was rendered peculiarly glorious, by his numerous conquests, yet it is branded in the sacred history, on account of the idolatries, luxury, rapine, and injustice with which it abounded. Amos and other prophets were sent to denounce the most awful judgments against Israel for these abominations, and to threaten their final dispersion. Jeroboam swayed the sceptre forty years.

Q. Why was Jeroboam's reign so prosperous, when he was so very wicked?

A. It is probable, though the king was wicked, there were many praying Israelites who mourned the deplorable state of their country. The scripture informs us, the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter; and said that he would not blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; therefore he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam.

Q. What king swayed the sceptre of Judah after Amaziah was slain?

A. Azariah; he is called Uzziah. He began to reign in Jerusalem in the fourteenth year of Jeroboam.

Q. What was the character of this prince?

A. He was a good man and very prosperous in the beginning of his reign, while he followed the counsels of Zechariah, who was a wise and pious man. But after his death, being inflamed with pride, Uzziah presumed to invade the priest's office, contrary to the law, and to offer incense on the altar of perfumes. The high priest, with eighty other zealous ministers of the temple remonstrated, in the warmest manner, upon the sin and danger of such an attempt; but the infatuated prince persisted in his folly, till he was sud-

denly smitten with a leprosy, and consequently obliged to quit the city.

Q. Did he live to repent his presumption?

A. Struck with remorse, he immediately resigned his crown to his son Jotham, and resided in a house without the city till the sixty-eighth year of his age, when he paid the debt of nature. He appears to have supported the worship of God all his days. His reign must have been happy for his people, though the close of it proved disgraceful to himself. His repentance was, no doubt, sincere, and his end happy.

Q. What were the most glorious actions of king Uzziah?

A. He subdued the Philistines, and took the cities of Gath and Jabneh. He subjected the Ammonites to a tribute. He overcame the Arabians, and subjected all the countries which lay between Judah and Egypt. He built a city upon the Red Sea, and placed a garrison in it. After the termination of his foreign wars, he rebuilt the walls and fortifications of Jerusalem, which were partly decayed through age, and which had been partly thrown down by Joash when he took Jerusalem. He fortified the wall with towers one hundred and fifty cubits high. He built a number of cities in different parts of his kingdom, which he strongly fortified. He paid great attention to agriculture, and had canals dug for the conveyance of water where it was wanted for the use of man, or the culture of the field. He had, also, a well armed and well disciplined army, with engines of war for besieging as well as defending cities.

Q. Who succeeded Jeroboam on the throne of Israel?

A. After an interregnum of eleven years and an half, Zechariah, the great grand son of Jehu, ascended the throne of Israel. The Divine prediction was then fulfilled, that Jehu's family should enjoy the kingdom to the fourth generation. From the ascension of this prince, we may date the downfall of Israel, as the subsequent history presents a melancholy spectacle of treasons, murders, and every species of anarchy. Zechariah was slain after a reign of six months, by one Shal lum, who was himself murdered by Menahem, Zechariah's general, a few days after he had usurped the throne.

Q. Did Menahem take possession of the throne?

A. Yes; he commenced his reign with an act of unparalleled cruelty. The city of Tirzah, having opposed his usurpation, he caused all the male inhabitants to be put to the sword, and exercised the most wanton barbarities upon the defenceless and unresisting females. He was soon after

alarmed by the approach of an Assyrian army, and purchased a shameful peace at the rate of one thousand talents of silver; this money he collected by a poll tax on the men of wealth, and is the first tax mentioned as raised by any king of Israel from their subjects.

Q. How long did Menahem's reign continue?

A. Ten years; nothing more is mentioned of him, but that he was a wicked man and an idolater. He however transmitted his kingdom to his son Pekabiah.

Q. Can you give me any account of the history of Assyria?

A. Nothing is mentioned in scripture of the Assyrian empire since the time of Nimrod. Profane authors give an account of a very powerful monarchy, which had lasted above a thousand years previous to this time; but this does not appear probable. David and Solomon met with no opposition in extending their kingdom to the Euphrates. A small tribe called Assur, helped the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, on some occasions. The city of Nineveh had become a great city, when Jonah was sent to prophecy against it: but there is so much obscurity rests on the history of this nation, that the most learned men have not been able to throw light on the subject. Some suppose that Pul was that king who repented, with all his people, at the preaching of Jonah; others, that he reigned after the kingdom was divided, and was the father of Tiglathpileser.

Q. How long did Pekabiah reign?

A. But two years; that short period was stained with idolatry and barbarity. He was slain by one Pekah, the general of his horse, who took the kingdom.

Q. Recount the chief actions in the reign of Pekah.

A. He was a great transgressor, and entailed misery on his people. He gained several victories over Jotham, king of Judah, but had the mortification of seeing one entire tribe conquered, and led captive by the Assyrians. His dominions, during a reign of twenty years, were filled with discord and rebellion, and he was finally assassinated by Hoshea, a successful rival.

Q. What was the character of Jotham king of Judah?

A. He is represented as a just and religious prince, who inherited all his father's virtues, without any of his failings, and who constantly kept in view the glory of God and the happiness of his people. He gained some important advantages over his enemies, and expended a considerable sum in erecting cities and castles for defence, and in adorning Jeru-

salem. He died after a glorious reign of sixteen years. Notwithstanding the piety of Jotham, his people were corrupt, and at the close of his reign God began to destroy Judah by Syria and Israel.

Q. What memorable transactions can you relate which happened about this period?

A. In the reign of Uzziah, the holy prophets began to publish their prophecies in writing: the chief of these was Isaiah. The original works were deposited in the temple, to serve for a monument to posterity. The prophecies of lesser extent, and orally delivered, were registered, according to custom, in the archives of the temple, with the history of their respective times.

Q. Did no event of importance take place among the heathens?

A. The Olympic games, instituted by Hercules, and long discontinued, were revived. From this revival are deduced the Olympiads, whereby the Grecians computed their years. At this period ended the times which are called fabulous, because, before this period, profane history is full of confusion and fables; but from this date, the history of the world is related in more faithful and distinct narratives.

Q. How were the Olympic games celebrated?

A. They were celebrated in Elis, a small province of Peloponnesus, with the universal concurrence of all Greece. They consisted in various exercises of the mental and bodily powers. The victors were publicly crowned, an honour which gained them particular privileges during life.

Q. How did the Greeks compute the number of their years by the Olympic games?

A. They gave the name of Olympiad to four entire years, which elapsed from one solemnity to another. On the fifth they kept the solemnity. By these festivals the Greeks became acquainted with each other; they softened the manners, and rendered Greece the most polished country in the world.

Q. How long before the christian era were these games revived?

A. Seven hundred and seventy-six years. In the year of the world, 3228.

Q. What great empire was founded in this century.

A. The Roman empire, by Romulus, grandson of Numitor, king of Alba, a descendant of Eneas, one of the Trojan heroes.

Q. At what period do you place the foundation of this empire?

A. About four hundred and thirty years after the destruction of Jewry; 753 before the birth of Christ; from the creation, 3250. Jotham was then king in Judea.

Q. Had not Romulus a twin brother?

A. Yes; he had one named Remus, whom he killed with his own hand.

Q. How came he to commit so great a crime?

A. The brothers were rivals for dominion. Romulus supposed he had received an intimation from the gods to erect a city on the hill where the two brothers (who were bred shepherds) had kept their flocks. Remus, in derision, leaped over the ditch which his brother had dug for the foundation of the city walls, and Romulus, in a moment of anger, slew him.

Q. How came these young men, who were descended from kings, to be bred to a shepherd's life?

A. Their grandfather, Numitor, had been dethroned by Amulius, his brother; Numitor's sons slain, and Rhea Sylvia, the king's daughter, obliged to become a vestal. She, however, became the mother of two sons, whose father she pretended was the god Mars. Amulius put Sylvia to death, and exposed the infants on the river Tiber. They were found and preserved by a shepherd. When they arrived at an age for war, they restored their grandfather to the throne of Alba, and began to prepare a dominion for themselves, when the quarrel took place which deprived Remus of life.

Q. How large was the city and territory of Rome?

A. The city, at first contained about a thousand houses, and commanded a territory of eight miles only. The number of inhabitants was three thousand.

Q. Who were the first inhabitants of Rome?

A. Criminals, outlaws, and fugitive slaves, to whom Romulus offered asylum, in order to increase its inhabitants.

Q. Had they any women among them?

A. Not many at first. The Sabines, their neighbours, whose daughters they asked in marriage, refused them with contempt. Romulus dissembled his resentment, and sometime after celebrated games, to which they invited the Sabine women with their daughters. They imprudently accepted the invitation. While they were engaged in viewing the games, the Roman youth rushed in with drawn swords,

Q. 2.

and forcibly carried off the young women, whom they obliged to become their wives.

Q. Did not the Sabines resent this conduct?

A. It produced a war which ended in uniting the two kingdoms. The Sabines had gained possession of part of the city by treachery, and the two armies were drawn up for battle, when the Roman women rushed in between the combatants, and by tears and entreaties prevailed on them to be reconciled to each other. A treaty was signed by which the two nations became one people.

Q. What was the government of Rome?

A. It was a mixed monarchy, consisting of the king, the senate, and the people. The king was elected by his subjects.

Q. How were the people divided?

A. Into three tribes, and each tribe into ten curiæ.

Q. How was the land divided?

A. Into three equal portions. The first was for the support of religion, the next for the wants of the state, and the third for the use of the citizens.

Q. Who composed the senate, and what powers did it possess?

A. It was composed of a hundred persons, respectable for their age and dignity of character. Their duty was to see that the laws were observed, to deliberate upon affairs of state, and to report their deliberations to the comitia or assemblies of the people, to whom the supreme power of deciding belonged; yet it was necessary that the decisions should be approved by the senate.

Q. What power did Romulus reserve for the king?

A. The command of the army, the convocation of the comitia and senate, the judging of important causes, and the dignity of sovereign pontiff.

Q. Was not the power of the king very small?

A. It appeared so to the people. Though he gave up to them the chief powers of sovereignty, the making laws, choosing magistrates, determining peace or war, he so preserved the means of directing their votes, that in fact he was entire master of every decision. The members of the senate were of his own choice. The military power, the superintendance of religion, and the distribution of justice, were retained in his own hands.

Q. What guards attended his person?

A. Twelve Lictors, who were armed with axes tied up in a bundle of rods, as emblems of his authority. To these he afterwards added a military corps, consisting of three hundred men, whose duty it was to fight either on foot or horseback. This was the origin of the Knights, at first called *Celeres*.

Q. What was the origin of clients and patrons?

A. The common people, who were called Plebeians, were encouraged to choose from among the higher rank, who were called Patricians, a friend and protector whom they styled a patron; and the plebeian thus protected was called client. The reciprocal offices of kindness between the patron and his clients, inspired them with mutual affection, and spread concord and moderation through the whole community.

Q. What particular laws are kept on record, made by Romulus?

A. Uncivilized nations have but few laws, and even those few laws are tinctured with barbarity. I will mention only two in the laws of Romulus. Husbands were allowed, not only to divorce their wives, but even to put them to death, not only for great crimes, but for having drunk wine. Women, on the contrary, were not allowed to separate from their husbands, on any pretence whatever. Fathers were made absolute over their children. They might sell them even to the third time, and at any age; and on some occasions they might put them to death. They were allowed to expose children who were born excessively deformed. The law did not compel them to provide for their younger daughters.

Q. What method did the Romans employ to increase their power?

A. They made continual wars upon their neighbours; were generally victorious, and by always admitting the vanquished to the rank of citizens, they amounted, before the death of Romulus, to forty-seven thousand.

Q. Can you relate the death of Romulus?

A. When the Sabines united with the Romans, their king, Tatius, was admitted to an equal share of power with Romulus; a hundred Sabines was also added to the senate. Tatius being assassinated about six years after the union, Romulus so managed affairs as to retain the power in his own hands. From this time he attempted to make himself despotic. The senators caused him to be privately assassinated, and to conceal the deed, pretended they had seen him car-

ried to heaven. He was worshipped as a god, under the name of Quirinus. He reigned thirty-seven years.

Q. Who was Sardanapalus?

A. He was the last king of the ancient line of monarchs in Assyria. He was so very effeminate as to shut himself up with his women, following their employments, and neglecting the affairs of government entirely.

Q. Who overthrew the Assyrian empire?

A. The Medes, a warlike people, animated by Arbaces, their governor, revolted against Sardanapalus; their example was followed by the rest of the subjects of Assyria. The effeminate monarch perished in his capitol, where he burned himself with his women, his eunuchs, and his riches, to escape falling into the hands of his enemies.

Q. How many kingdoms arose out of this ancient monarchy?

A. Three; Media, a second Assyrian kingdom, of which Nineveh continued the capital; and the kingdom of Babylon?

Q. Did Arbaces reign over Media?

A. No; he established a free government. Media does not appear to have been independent of Assyria till several years after this time, when they elected a lord, named Dejoces, for their king.

Q. Who reigned at Nineveh?

A. Tiglath-pileser, to whom some have given the name of Ninus the younger.

Q. Who established the kingdom of Babylon?

A. Baladan, by the Greeks named Beloris. He is also called Nobonassar. [B. C. 747.] Ptolemy and other ancient astronomers, reckoned their years from the prince's reign.—Hence the era of Nobonassar.

Q. What is meant by an Era?

A. It signifies a number of years, begun at a certain period, distinguished by some great event.

Q. Who succeeded Jotham on the throne of Judah?

A. Ahaz, an impious and wicked prince, who reared altars at Jerusalem for the gods of the Canaanites, and sacrificed his own son in honor of their idols. [B. C. 792.]

Q. What punishment was brought on the king for these enormities?

A. The Lord brought against him the united forces of Syria and Israel: these defeated Ahaz, took most of his

strong cities and besieged Jerusalem. Ahaz was greatly alarmed, but the prophet Isaiah was sent to assure him, that God would not, at that time, destroy Jerusalem. The king of Syria finding the city very strong, despaired of reducing it, and returned to Damascus with the spoil he had acquired from Ahaz. On his departure, Ahaz, supposing himself sufficiently strong to cope with the army of Israel, drew out his army, joined battle with Pekah and was entirely defeated.

Q. What use did Pekah make of his victory ?

A. The Israelites spoiled the country and took a great number of prisoners, whom they intended to keep for slaves ; but the Lord sent a prophet, named Obed, who reproved them for their cruelty to their brethren. He informed them they had not gained the victory by their own prowess or skill ; but God had given the people of Judah into their hand because of their sins. He then reminded them, that they too had transgressed, and bade them fear the vengeance of Heaven, unless they released the captives.

Q. Did the Israelites listen to the voice of the prophet ?

A. Yes, they released the captives ; clothed them with the spoils they had taken, and carried them back as far as Jericho, which is near Jerusalem, and returned to Samaria.

Q. Did Ahaz repent after this signal interposition of Heaven ?

A. He did not ; but being again oppressed by his enemies, he sent costly presents to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and sued for his assistance. The king of Assyria, received the ambassadors kindly and accepted the presents of Ahaz. He made war upon Syria, took Damascus their capital, slew Rezin, and entirely demolished the Syrian kingdom. [B. C. 740.] He also afflicted the Israelites, pillaged the country and carried away a great number of captives. His alliance did not benefit Judah, for he did not assist Ahaz to recover any of the places which had been taken from him during the war, either by Syria, or the other nations, who had not submitted to the Assyrian government. Tiglath-pileser also rose in his demands upon Ahaz ; so that the land was almost exhausted, by the presents and subsidies, which were extorted by this pretended friend and ally.

Q. What other mischief followed from this alliance ?

A. Instead of two petty princes, which he had before for his neighbors, he had now a mighty monarch for his borderer, which no power in the nation was able to resist. From this time, the Jews were excluded from all traffic in the South

Sea, which before this period was the chief source of their wealth.

Q. When Ahaz saw himself oppressed by his pretended friends, equally with his enemies, did he not return to the worship of God ?

A. His misfortunes seemed to harden his heart more against God: on a visit which he made to Tiglath-pileser at Damascus, he saw an altar there which he thought more convenient, than the one built according to God's direction; he caused a pattern of it to be sent to Jerusalem, and gave orders to Urijah the high priest, to remove the altar of the Lord, and substitute the Syrian altar in its place. Urijah obeyed the king's command. The king, on his return, shut up the house of the Lord, and obliged his people to worship the gods of the nations which had destroyed the country; pretending they were more powerful than the God of Israel. He also destroyed the temple, stripping it of all its ornaments and sacred vessels, which he melted down, either to supply his own extravagance, or as gifts to the king of Assyria.

Q. Was he permitted to reign long ?

A. He died in the thirty-ninth year of his age, having reigned sixteen years; [B. C. 727.] His character was so odious, he was not allowed a burial in the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. He was succeeded by Hezekiah.

CHAP. XIV.

The reign of Hezekiah, and the history of the neighbouring nations.

Q. How long did Pekah reign over Israel ?

A. About twenty years; he was then murdered by the treachery of one of his courtiers, named Hoshea.

Q. Did Hoshea take possession of the throne ?

A. During more than eight years the kingdom was in an unsettled state; at the end of that period Hoshea obtained the crown. The years of his reign are computed from the time of his establishment on the throne, and not from the death of his predecessor. Hoshea began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah.

Q. What was the character of Hoshea ?

A. He was a wicked man, but not so notorious an offender as the kings who reigned before him. The golden calf, which was worshipped at Dan, had been carried away by the Assyrians before his accession. Hoshea did not attempt to reinstate it, but allowed those who were so disposed, to go up to Jerusalem to worship.

Q. Was the destruction of Israel retarded by this partial reformation?

A. The crimes of the Israelites had rendered them fully ripe for destruction. The merit of Hoshea, even if he had been a truly good man, could not have saved the nation from the just punishment of Heaven. By destroying the nation during the reign of this prince, who was less wicked than his predecessors, the Lord taught his people, that he punished them for the crimes of the nation at large, and not for those of the prince only, as many were ready to imagine.

Q. What enemy was permitted to destroy the kingdom of Israel?

A. Shalmanezar, the son of Tiglath-pileser; he is called Enemessar in Tobit, and Shalmon in Hosea.

Q. When did Tiglath-pileser die?

A. In the fourteenth year of Ahaz, after a reign of nineteen years. [B. C. 729.]

Q. Did Shalmanezar conquer Hoshea in his first expedition?

A. Not entirely; he dispossessed him of the greater part of his dominion; subjected him to a yearly tribute, and then returned to Assyria.

Q. How long did the king of Assyria permit Hoshea to remain his vassal?

A. But a few years; Sabacon, an Ethiopian king, subdued Egypt, and having destroyed their king by fire, reigned over that country. This is the king who is called So, in the scriptures. Sabacon, after ascending the Egyptian throne, became very powerful. Hoshea entered into an alliance with him, hoping, by his assistance, to shake off the Assyrian yoke. Confiding in the protection of Egypt, he refused to pay the customary tribute to Shalmanezar. This defection roused the anger of the Assyrian monarch; he marched with a formidable force into Palestine. Having subdued all the adjacent country, besieged Hoshea in Samaria.

Q. How long did the city resist his arms?

A. It held out three years, during which time the inhabitants suffered every kind of distress. At the end of the

third year Shalmaneser took the city, put Hoshea in chains, and confined him in prison during the remainder of his life. He carried nearly all the inhabitants into captivity, and placed them in Persia and Media, and brought inhabitants from his own dominions, and peopled the land of Israel. These transactions took place in the seventh year of Hezekiah's reign, and the ninth of Hoshea's. [B. C. 724.]

Q. What remarkable persons were carried captive at this time?

A. Tobit, with his wife Anna, and his son Tobias. Tobit was raised to the honour of purveyor to the king of Assyria.

Q. Did Shalmaneser make any other conquests?

A. It is supposed that he conquered Moab, and fulfilled the terrible prophecy against that country, related in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Isaiah. After Shalmaneser had taken Samaria, he sent to Hezekiah to demand the tribute which Ahaz had agreed to pay for the kingdom of Judaea. Hezekiah, trusting in God, refused to pay him any tribute. Shalmaneser was prevented from attacking Judaea by a war with Tyre, which proved unsuccessful.

Q. What misfortunes befel the heathens which were planted in Samaria?

A. They were destroyed in great numbers by lions. They justly concluded this was a punishment inflicted for not worshipping the God of the country. They applied to the king of Assyria, who sent them some of the captive priests to teach them the religion of Israel. These priests taught them the laws of Moses, but in that mutilated state in which it had been observed in the kingdom of Samaria. They admitted Jehovah among their gods, but did not worship him as the only true God.

Q. Did God accept of this imperfect worship?

A. The Israelites did not so much as fear the wrath of the Almighty, but the poor pagans trembled at his power, and to avert his wrath, paid him some ignorant worship, according to the imperfect instructions given them; to this was an external acknowledgment of his power and Godhead, and as we may suppose they acted up to the best of their knowledge, God was pleased, in consequence, to withdraw his judgments from them.

Q. Will you give me the history of Hezekiah's reign?

A. He had, in the last years of his father's reign, been admitted a partner with him in the kingdom. As long as his father lived he could make no reformation in church or state; but as soon as he was dead, and Hezekiah had the

whole power in his hands, he began a thorough work of reformation. [B. C. 726.]

Q. What was the first step taken by Hezekiah?

A. He opened the house of the Lord which his father had shut up: he collected the priests and Levites, and commanded them to remove the new altar which his father had made, and restore the altar of the Lord; to purge the temple of all impurities, and attend to their duties in the sanctuary, according to the law of Moses.

Q. At what time did Hezekiah celebrate the passover?

A. There was not sufficient time to prepare the house of God before the regular time of keeping the passover. The law of Moses allowed (Numbers, chap. ix. v. 10, 11.) a second passover to be kept in cases of necessity, on the fourteenth day of the second month. King Hezekiah having consulted with the chief priests and princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, decreed that the second passover should be kept by the whole nation, instead of the first. Accordingly he sent messengers to notify, not only his own subjects, but to invite all the tribes of Israel to come to Jerusalem and keep the passover.

Q. Was the invitation of Hezekiah accepted?

A. Many of the Israelites laughed at Hezekiah's message, and some abused and insulted his ambassadors; notwithstanding great numbers accepted the invitation, and went up to Jerusalem to keep the festival, so that it was the largest congregation which had solemnized the passover since the reign of Solomon.

Q. How many days did they devote to this solemnity?

A. The law demands only seven days, but the Hebrews were so elated with joy, at seeing their ancient worship restored, they doubled the time of the festival, and kept it fourteen days, though it must have been about the time of harvest. Thus we see that holy affections will draw the heart from worldly affairs; nor should every such deviation from worldly prudence be termed superstition or fanaticism.

Q. Were all the Israelites properly prepared to keep the passover?

A. Many of the ten tribes, having come at a short warning, and being destitute of instruction, were not regularly prepared to eat the passover; but as they appeared very sincere and earnest in returning to the Lord, they were allowed to partake, notwithstanding their ceremonial disqualifications. Hezekiah, sensible there was danger in this deviation from the law, prayed that the Lord would pardon every one that

prepared his heart to seek him, though not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. To this prayer the Lord granted a favourable answer.

Q. What took place at the conclusion of the feast ?

A. After the passover was ended, the people went through all the coasts of Judah and Benjamin, and brake all the images in pieces, cut down the consecrated groves, and destroyed every monument of idolatry which they could find in Judea. The Israelites, on their return home, also destroyed the monuments of idolatry from the country of Samaria. Hoshea, either through a total want of religion, or regard for it, concurred, or rather did not prevent their zeal for the cause of God. Thus the worship of God was again universally established through the whole country of the twelve tribes. Had they persevered in serving the Lord with sincere hearts, they would have preserved their country from destruction. Among the other monuments of idolatry, Hezekiah destroyed the brazen serpent which Moses set up in the wilderness.

Q. Why was this brazen serpent, which was set up at the command of God, destroyed ?

A. It was not erected as an object of worship, though the Israelites were healed when they looked upon it ; they were taught to consider it as a symbol of divine mercy, and not an object of devotion. It had been preserved, as well as the pot of manna and Aaron's rod, as monuments of the miraculous mercy of God to his people in the wilderness ; but as the people made an idol of it, Hezekiah acted properly in breaking it in pieces.

Q. Will you go on with Hezekiah's history ?

A. Hezekiah, as we observed before, refused to pay Shalmanezzer the tribute which had been imposed on his father. The Syrians had given that monarch employment during his reign, which lasted fourteen years. At his death Sennacherib his son succeeded him. This prince is also called Sargon. As soon as he was seated on the throne he renewed the demand which his father had made upon Hezekiah. On his refusal to comply with this demand, the king of Assyria marched with a great army into Judea. This was in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign.

Q. What remarkable providence did Hezekiah experience this year ?

A. He fell sick, and was informed by the prophet Isaiah that his disease was mortal ; but on his earnest prayer for longer life, he received another message by the prophet, who

informed him God had granted his request, and would add fifteen years more to his life. To give him full assurance of his miraculous recovery, God at his request caused the sun to go backward ten degrees on the dial.

Q. What fault was the king guilty of on his recovery ?

A. His heart was elated with pride. Merodach Baladan, king of Babylon, sent ambassadors to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery, and to enquire into the miracle which had astonished the astronomers of Babylon. He also wished to form an alliance with Hezekiah, against Sennacherib, whose growing power the Babylonians had reason to fear, as well as the Jews. Hezekiah was greatly flattered by this embassy, and in the pride of his heart shewed those ambassadors all the riches of his kingdom. He might also have supposed by this display of his wealth, to make the Babylonians set a greater value on his alliance.

Q. What rebuke was given him for this pride of his heart ?

A. Isaiah was sent to inform him, that all those riches on which he valued himself, should be carried to Babylon, together with the king and people of Judea. This message restored the king to himself: he replied that the sentence was just, and acknowledged the goodness of God in deferring the sentence to a future period.

Q. What success had Sennacherib in his expedition against Judea ?

A. He took a number of the fortified towns, and laid siege to Jerusalem. Hezekiah's faith in the protection of God was not firm, as it ought to have been. He first looked to Egypt for aid, but being reprov'd by Isaiah, for this alliance, he offered to pay the demands of Sennacherib, if he would withdraw his army. The king of Assyria agreed to withdraw his forces, on condition that Hezekiah should pay him three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold, and duly render the tribute imposed on his father.

Q. Did Hezekiah consent to those conditions ?

A. He consented to them, and to fulfil the engagement was obliged to despoil the temple of its ornaments, and to part with much of that treasure which had filled his heart with pride.

Q. Did Sennacherib regard the articles of this treaty ?

A. He withdrew his army from Judea for a short time, not so much on account of his treaty, as to punish the Egyptians for entering into an alliance with Hezekiah.

Q. What success had the king of Assyria against Egypt ?

A. For three years, he ravaged the country without meeting much resistance. Sethon the son of So, was king of Egypt. He was a very weak prince. Leaving the affairs of government to his courtiers, he affected the office of priest, and gave himself wholly to the service of Vulcan.— At this period may be dated the fulfilment of the prophecies of Isaiah and Nahum, against Egypt. [Isaiah, ch. xx. : Nahum, chap. iii. 9, 10.] No-ammon, spoken of by Nahum, was the same as Thebes, famous for its hundred gates.

Q. Was the king of Assyria successful during the whole war?

A. After he had reduced most of Egypt, he was stopped in his career before the city of Peluzium. Having spent some time in the siege of that city, his army, probably discontented with a repulse, and hearing that the king of Ethiopia had entered Egypt with a great army, not choosing to wait his approach he raised the siege, and returning into Judea, began to commit hostilities there, contrary to the agreement made with Hezekiah.

Q. What preparations did Hezekiah make for the defence of Jerusalem?

A. Hezekiah, with the advice of his counsellors, repaired the walls and made new ones where they were weak, and fortified them with towers. He also provided all kinds of arms and artillery, which could be wanted for defending the place against assaults, or for annoying the enemy. He caused all the people to be enrolled and marshalled for war, who were able to bear arms, and appointed over them officers of experience to instruct them in military exercises, and to lead them to war when occasion required. He stopped all the wells of water in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and turned the courses of the brooks and springs, which flowed in the direction of the enemy. But though he made these great preparations, his chief hope lay in the protection of Heaven. Hezekiah addressed his people, and bade them not fear the mighty host of Assyria, for with them, said he, is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God. The people were greatly encouraged by the words of the king.

Q. Can you relate the particulars of Sennacherib's invasion?

A. He laid siege to Lachish, a strong city at some distance from Jerusalem, but sent three of his generals, Tartan, Rabsharis and Rabshakeh, to besiege the capital. Rabshakeh, who is supposed to have been an apostate Jew, sent to Hezekiah, and desired a personal interview with him; but the king did not choose to expose his person to the treachery of a perfid-

his enemy, and sent several officers of his court to hear their proposals: Rabshakeh delivered that insulting and blasphemous language to Hezekiah's officers, which is related in full, in two places of scripture, (2. Kings, chap. xviii. and in Isaiah xxxvi.) This speech was delivered under the wall of the city, in the hearing of the people, and in the Hebrew tongue, in hopes of producing a revolt.

Q. Had it any effect on the king or people?

A. The people took no notice of the speech. The king's confidence in God was increased by the blasphemy of the Assyrians; for though he and his people were unworthy of divine favour, yet he had confidence that God would vindicate his great name, which was reproached by the proud foe. He therefore entreated the prophet Isaiah to unite with him in earnest prayer to God, for his afflicted people, and for his temple, lest his holy name should be blasphemed among the heathen.

Q. What answer was given to Hezekiah's prayers?

A. The prophet Isaiah was sent to assure him that God would protect his people, and bring their enemies to a disgraceful end.

Q. What was the first disappointment the Assyrians received?

A. Sennacherib had withdrawn from Lachish. It is not known whether he had taken the city, and lay before Libnah, when Rabshakeh returned to give him an account of what had passed at Jerusalem. When Sennacherib heard with what indifference the Jews received his first message, he sent a letter to Hezekiah, defying both him and his God, in a most impious manner. This letter Hezekiah spread before the Lord in his holy temple, and besought him to let the nations know that Jehovah alone was the God of the universe.

Q. Was there an answer given to this prayer of the king?

A. Isaiah was again commissioned, to inform Hezekiah that he had heard the blasphemy of the Assyrian king, and would utterly destroy both him and his army. As a sign he informed his people that the earth should yield them sustenance for two years without culture. The devastations of the Assyrians, it is supposed, had prevented the land from being sown that year, and that the next was the sabbatical year, when they were commanded not to till their fields.

Q. What prevented Sennacherib from marching directly to attack Jerusalem?

A. He was informed that **Tyhakah**, king of Ethiopia, was marching in pursuit of him, as one who had fled through fear. Upon this information, he marched with all his forces to meet him. A battle ensued; the Ethiopians were entirely defeated. The victory was from God who had denounced vengeance on Egypt and Ethiopia, by the prophet Isaiah, (chap. xviii. 20—32.) The king of Assyria was only God's executioner, yet he knew it not, and elated with pride he returned into Judea, with the fixed purpose to destroy the nation and worship of Jehovah, who had given him success in all his wars.

Q. What became of Sennacherib and his army?

A. When he had arrived in Judea, not far from Jerusalem, flushed with victory, and believing that the gods of the nations, as well as men were at his disposal, he was on his march towards Jerusalem, expecting in a few days to destroy the place, and blot out the nation; an angel of the Lord went forth, and in one night smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and eighty-five thousand men. [B. C. 710.] Sennacherib terrified at this awful judgment, fled in the greatest precipitation to Nineveh, where he passed the remainder of his life, despised by his subjects and hateful to himself. This happened in the eighteenth year of Hezekiah's reign.

Q. Was the remainder of Hezekiah's reign prosperous?

A. He was both feared and honoured by all the surrounding nations. Being blessed by God, and in peace with his enemies, he had leisure to improve Jerusalem by many useful works. He made an aqueduct to supply the city with water; he promoted the worship of God, and served him with the same ardour and sincerity as David, and was not guilty of David's faults: he had the scriptures copied out by a faithful scribe. The Proverbs of Solomon were collected and added to the other holy writings at this time. The scripture informs us, there was none before or after him, who kept God's commandments faithfully like Hezekiah. He reigned twenty nine years.

Q. Was there peculiar honours paid to Hezekiah's remains?

A. Yes: all Judah lamented his death, and paid every mark of respect to his remains. They were deposited in the most honourable place in the sepulchre of the kings of Judah.

Q. Can you describe this sepulchre?

A. It lies without the walls of Jerusalem; but the city before it was destroyed by the Romans is supposed to have

firmly extended beyond the sepulchre. It consists of a large court about 120 feet square, with a gallery on the left hand, supported by pillars cut out of the solid rock of marble. At the end of the gallery is a narrow passage leading into a large hall about 20 feet square. Within the large room are several smaller ones, with stone doors. All these rooms are cut out of the solid rock. In the sides of the small rooms are niches in which the corpses of the kings were deposited in stone coffins. In the innermost of these rooms the body of Hezekiah was deposited. The niche in which it was placed was at the upper end: this place was assigned him as the most honourable place among the dead. This sepulchre remains still entire, and is supposed to have been the work of Solomon, and is the only thing remaining of old Jerusalem.

Q. What effect did Sennacherib's defeat produce at Nineveh?

A. His army was so much weakened, and he so much despised by his subjects, that the Medes flung off all subjection to his empire. Sennacherib irritated beyond measure at his repeated disappointments, became so tyrannical, that he was detested even by his own family. His two eldest sons slew him, and having made their escape into Armenia, Esarhaddon his third son ascended the throne.

Q. In what year did Esarhaddon begin his reign?

A. It is supposed he began to reign 706 years before the Christian Era, about the 22d year of Hezekiah, which was the last year of Sethon, king of Egypt. Sethon was succeeded by Tahakab, the Ethiopian king who came with an army for his assistance against Sennacherib.

CHAP. XV.

The History of the Medes, Assyrians, Romans, Egyptians, Judah, and Israel, from the death of Hezekiah to the reign of Josiah.

Q. Who was the first king of Media?

A. Dejoces, who was first a judge, or common arbitrator of quarrels, which took place very frequently while the government was in an unsettled state. [B. C. 700.] Dejoces discovered such justice and abilities in the execution of his

office, they elected him for their king. He began his reign in the nineteenth year of Hezekiah.

Q. What city was built by Dejoces ?

A. The city of Ecbatana; it was built on a hill and surrounded with seven walls. The walls were so disposed as to be distinctly seen rising one above the other on the ascent of the hill, which regularly sloped on every side. Within the central enclosure stood the king's palace; in the sixth, the officers of his household were lodged. The intermediate spaces between the other walls were appointed for the habitation of the people. After the city was finished, Dejoces obliged part of the Medes to settle in it. He employed all the powers of his mind to frame good laws, and to make his people cultivate the arts of civilized life. In order to inspire respect for his person, he kept himself concealed in his palace, and transacted all business through the interposition of his officers. This seclusion, which rendered Dejoces respectable in the eyes of an ignorant people, was productive of much evil to the kingdom in after ages; his successors, imitating his example, became ignorant and effeminate, and the nation was ruled by artful courtiers, who had not the good of the community at heart.

Q. Who succeeded Hezekiah ?

A. Manasseh, who was but twelve years of age when he succeeded his father in the government. He had the misfortune to fall into the hands of profligate guardians, who were enemies to religion and order; they corrupted his mind, both as to religion and government. The very commencement of his reign was a complication of tyranny, profligacy, and impiety.

Q. What particular acts of guilt are recorded of Manasseh ?

A. He not only restored all the idolatries of his grandfather Ahaz, but went much beyond him in every abomination which could dishonour the nation. [B. C. 698.] Ahaz shut up the house of God; Manasseh converted it into a temple for idols. He placed an image of the grove in the most holy place, and erected altars for Baal and all the hosts of heaven, in the courts of the sanctuary. He used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits, and made his children pass through the fire to Moloch. Idols, groves, and altars, were erected in every part of Jerusalem and Judea. Every practice which could corrupt the people, introduce impiety, and destroy true religion, was not only encouraged and urged upon the inhabitants by the king's commands, but

was enforced by the executioner. Multitudes of innocent victims fell a sacrifice to this bloody tyrant, till the whole land, defiled with the blood of martyrs, cried for vengeance.

Q. Was not Manasseh warned by the prophets to refrain from these acts of guilt?

A. Yes; he was warned repeatedly, but he refused to listen to their admonitions. He put several of them to death; among the rest, the Jews affirm, was the aged prophet Isaiah, who was sawn asunder, to make death more painful.

Q. What judgment was brought on the king's people for these enormities?

A. Manasseh was taken captive, bound in chains, and carried to Babylon, where he was cast into a dungeon. The people of Judea were threatened with utter destruction for the sins of Manasseh's reign.

Q. What king reigned at Babylon when Manasseh was led captive?

A. A succession of weak princes had rapidly succeeded each other on the throne of Babylon. The last left no son to inherit the kingdom, and eight years of anarchy ensued. Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, took advantage of this disordered state of the nation, conquered Babylon and added it to his own empire. [B. C. 680.] Esarhaddon, after he had settled the government of Babylon, prepared a great army and marched into Syria and Palestine, to recover those provinces which had been taken from his father after the destruction of his army in Judea. At this time was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, made in the first year of Ahaz, against Samaria, that in three score and five years, Ephraim should be broken, and be no more a people. [B. C. 676.] Exactly sixty-five years from the first of Ahaz, Esarhaddon carried away the remainder of the Israelites, and to this day they have been scattered among different nations. He also defeated Manasseh; after the battle, finding him hid in a thicket of thorns, he bound him in chains and carried him to Babylon.

Q. Did Manasseh end his life in captivity?

A. No; his misfortunes produced a thorough reformation in his character; he was restored again to his kingdom. The period of his imprisonment, and the means of liberation are not mentioned by the inspired historian. God, who setteth up princes and deprives them of power at his pleasure, undoubtedly heard the prayers of the penitent king, and moved the emperor of Babylon to restore him to his people.

Q. Did Manasseh continue to give proofs of reformation after his restoration?

A. He took the earliest opportunity of redressing all the grievances in his kingdom, by cleansing the temple, demolishing heathen altars and idols, restoring the ancient worship and repairing the fortifications of the city.

Q. Who were Manasseh's chief ministers.

A. Shebna was Manasseh's chief counsellor before his captivity. He was scribe, or secretary, to Hezekiah, but he did not probably shew his evil disposition till after that monarch's death. But after he was raised to the government of the nation, during the minority of Manasseh, he proved a very demon, and was the mover of all the enormities recorded in this reign, as we learn from the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah. He was carried captive with Manasseh, and died at Babylon. Manasseh, on his restoration, appointed Eliakim, a very good and wise man, for his minister; he had, also, served under Hezekiah. Eliakim administered the government with such wisdom, justice, and piety, he is styled the father of his people. (Isaiah, xxii.) In consequence of this happy change, Manasseh reigned prosperously during the remainder of his life, which was about thirty years, making in his whole reign fifty-five years.

Q. Where was Manasseh buried?

A. The beginning of his reign had been so notoriously wicked, notwithstanding his signal repentance, the Jews would not allow him the honour of being buried in the sepulchres of the kings, but laid him in a grave made for him in his own garden.

Q. How long did Tirhakah reign in Egypt?

A. He died in the eleventh year of Manasseh, after he had reigned eighteen years. [B. C. 671.] He was the last of the Ethiopian kings who reigned in Egypt. After his death, twelve of the principal nobility seized on the government, and ruled the kingdom fifteen years.

Q. How was this government of nobles overthrown?

A. An oracle had declared that one of their number, who should offer a libation to Vulcan in a brazen bowl, should gain the sovereignty of Egypt. To prevent its fulfilment, they bound themselves, by the most solemn oaths, not to invade each others dominions. They reigned together in perfect harmony fifteen years. To leave a monument of their concord, they built the famous labyrinth, which consisted of twelve palaces mysteriously united, emblematical of the twelve princes united by the secret bonds of friendship and policy. One day the twelve kings were assisting at a solemn sacrifice in the temple of Vulcan; the priests

having presented golden bowls for the libation, one was wanting. Prammetchus, one of the kings, without any design, supplied the want of this bowl by his brazen helmet. This accident recalled to their memory the prediction of the oracle, and created a spirit of jealousy in the minds of other kings. They united against Prammetchus, and banished him to the confines of Egypt. He waited several years for a favourable opportunity of revenge for his disgrace. At length some Grecian soldiers, from Caira and Iona, were cast on the shores of Egypt by a storm. Prammetchus engaged them, by large promises, to espouse his cause. He privately raised other forces, placed these Greeks at their head, defeated the eleven kings, and remained sole possessor of Egypt. [B. C. 670.]

Q. What was the first of his reign ?

A. As soon as he was settled in the kingdom, he entered into a war with the king of Assyria, respecting the boundaries of the two kingdoms, which lasted many years. After the Assyrians had conquered Syria, Palestine alone separated their respective territories. Each monarch exerted his power to become master of this province. And it fell alternately into the hands of the kings of Assyria and Egypt.—From the reign of Hezekiah, till the captivity of Manasseh, it appears to have been under the dominion of Egypt. But from the conquest of Judea by Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria became master of all the country, to the very confines of Egypt. That kingdom being divided under twelve princes, who were at variance among themselves, was in no capacity to stop Esarhaddon's progress. But when Prammetchus had united the kingdom under himself, and composed the discord which had weakened the government, he concerted measures for recovering the territories taken from Egypt by the Assyrians. In the seventh year of Manasseh's captivity he marched with an army into Palestine ; but was stopped in his progress by the city of Ashdod, one of the frontier towns, which formerly belonged to the Philistines. This town was so strongly fortified, it cost him a blockade of twenty-nine years before he became master of it. The city was so entirely reduced before it surrendered, it was of little value to Prammetchus, and therefore Jeremiah the prophet calls it *the remnant of Ashdod*, (Jer. chap. xxv. v. 20) intimating thereby the great change which had already taken place in that once renowned city.

Q. Was the capture of Ashdod the conclusion of this war ?

A. It was not ; while part of the army lay before Ashdod,

the other part carried on the war, with considerable vigour, against the other parts of Palestine. Manasseh, who was now restored again to his throne, and held it as a vassal of the king of Babylon, fortified Jerusalem anew, and placed strong garrisons in all the frontier towns to preserve them from the king of Egypt. In order to fix Manasseh firmly in his interest, the king of Assyria seems, at this time, to have given him command over Samaria as well as Judea, for it is certain his grandson, Josiah, reigned, not only over Judah, but over all the country which was formerly possessed by the ten tribes of Israel. And the most probable account that can be given of the manner of his obtaining this increase of territory is, that it was given to Manasseh, on this occasion, to hold in homage of the kings of Assyria; and that after his death it was continued to his son, and grandson, on the same conditions.

Q. Did Esarhaddon survive Manasseh?

A. No; he died in the thirty-first year of that monarch's reign, after a prosperous reign of thirty-nine years over Assyria, and thirteen over Babylon; [B. C. 668.] And was succeeded by his son Soasduchinus, who is supposed to be the same with Nabuchodonozor spoken of in the book of Judith.

Q. What do we read of this monarch's reign?

A. In the twelfth year of his reign, which was the forty-third of Manasseh, he fought a great battle in the plains of Ragau, with Dejoces, king of Media, who is supposed to be Arphaxed spoken of in Judith. [B. C. 658.] Dejoces was slain, and his whole army destroyed. The king of Assyria followed up his victory, subdued the country, made himself master of Ecbatana, and having broken down the walls, and destroyed its stately edifices, retired to Nineveh, where he gave entertainments to his officers who, with the whole army, feasted an hundred and twenty days.

Q. What was the next feat of the Assyrian monarch?

A. When the days of revelry were ended, he called his officers, nobles, and chief counsellors together, to inquire which of the tributary provinces had disobeyed the summons given them to assist him in his war with the Medes; and finding that none of the western provinces had obeyed his commands, he sent his general, Holofernes, with a large army to take vengeance on his rebellious tributaries. Holofernes, accordingly, marched into Syria, and having destroyed many places, and struck terror into the other provinces, obliged them all to yield implicit obedience to the king of Assyria, and acknowledge him, not only as their

master, but the object of their worship. The Jews were the only nation which refused to obey his arbitrary decrees; trusting in God, they fortified their strong holds, which enraged Holofernes, and he was determined to destroy them entirely, but was himself slain by Judith, and his whole army dispersed, as related in the book of Judith.

Q. What are the reasons for placing these transactions at this time?

A. Arphaxed, in Judith, is said to be that king of Media, who was the founder of Ecbatana, which all other writers agree to have been Dejoces, and the beginning of the twelfth year of Saosduchinus, agrees exactly with the last year of Dejoces, when this battle of Ragau is said to have been fought. There are several particulars in this history which make it inconsistent with any other time. It took place while Nineveh was the metropolis of the Assyrian empire; while the Persians, Syrians, Phenicians, Cilicians, and Egyptians were subject to them; while the Median empire existed, and not long after the building of Ecbatana. Some historians place the history of Judith after the captivity; but that date must be erroneous, for before that period Nineveh was destroyed, and both the Assyrian and Median empires wholly extinguished, and the Persians, instead of being subject to the Assyrians, were the rulers, not only of that nation, but all the east, from the Hellespont to the river Indus. Learned men are not agreed in opinion whether the history related in Judith is a true history, or an allegory written to amuse and animate the Jews in a day of trouble.

Q. What are the objections to the authenticity of the history?

A. The first is, that Joakim or Eliakim (for they are both the same name) is said to have been high priest, and there are none of that name mentioned as high priest till after the captivity.

Secondly, Achoir, the Ammonite, in his speech to Holofernes, speaks of the temple as being lately cast to the ground; and in the fourth chapter, the people are said to have newly returned from the captivity.

Thirdly, in the conclusion of the book, Judith is said to have lived an hundred and five years, and that none made the people of Israel afraid during her life, nor a long time after her death. Supposing her to be forty-five when she went out to Holofernes, to make her one hundred and five when she died, the Jews must have enjoyed sixty years of peace, which would extend the time to the fourth year of

Zedekiah, when the Jews were greatly harrassed by the Babylonians, and soon after entirely subdued.

Q. How are these objections to be answered?

A. To the first of these objections it may be answered, that the scripture no where professeth to give an exact catalogue of all such as had been high priests. In every catalogue of the sons of Aaron, the names of several have been inserted who were not high priests, and several high priests have been left out; so that Joakim or Eliakim might have been high priest in the reign of Manasseh, and yet not be mentioned in the catalogue recorded in scripture. What is said of Eliakim, in Isaiah, that God would commit the government to his hands—that he should be a father to the inhabitants of Judah—that the key of the house of David should be laid on his shoulder to open and shut without controul, agrees very well with that part which Joakim is said to have acted, in the book of Judith. To the second objection may be alleged, that the words in Achior's speech concerning the temple's having been cast to the ground, are not found in the most correct copies of the original Chaldee; and that part which speaks of the captivity of the Jews and their late restoration, may be better applied to the Assyrian captivity under Manasseh, than the Babylonish under Zedekiah. As to the third objection, Manasseh might be then engaged in a distant part of the kingdom, and Joakim entrusted with all the affairs of Jerusalem during his absence; and if Joakim were the Eliakim mentioned in the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah, and as chief minister of state, invested with that amplitude of power, as is there described, and Manasseh lately restored to the throne, not much loved or thought of, it would be natural for the historian to mention Eliakim, who had the real power, and not his master, who, in comparison, was only a cypher. The long peace said to have taken place, is inconsistent with the true history of the Jews; but this ought not to condemn the whole book. There is scarce any history written but what to the next age appears, as to time, place, and other circumstances, with such seeming inconsistencies, as cannot be easily reconciled.

The time allotted to the government of several of the judges is counted from the beginning of the oppression from which the judge relieved them. Thus it is said the land had rest forty years under Othniel, which must include the whole period of the oppression which they suffered under the king of Mesopotamia, and some suppose from the death of Joshua. Under Ehud, the land had rest eighty years, which must be counted from the forty years mentioned before.

Thus the long peace mentioned in Judith might include the whole period of time from Manasseh's reign.

Q. Was the kingdom of Media entirely destroyed by their late defeat?

A. No; Phraortes, the son of Dejoces, succeeded his father and reigned over Media twenty-two years.

Q. How long did Saosduchinus reign?

A. He died in the fifty-first year of Manasseh's reign, [B. C. 688;] and Chiniladanus succeeded him.

Q. What memorable transactions took place in Europe during the reigns of Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh?

A. Codrus, the last king of Athens, devoted himself to death for the good of his country. After his death, the Athenians were governed by magistrates, called Archons. They were at first chosen for life. This form of government had continued three hundred years; but about this period the Athenians, whose humour, insensibly led them to a popular government, reduced the administration of their magistrates to ten years.

Q. Who succeeded Romulus in the kingdom of Rome?

A. Numa Pompilius, a Sabine.

Q. What was the character of this prince?

A. He was a very wise and good king. He formed the religion and civilized the manners of the Romans, who, before his reign, were not much better than savages. He abolished all distinction, and obliterated all party jealousies between the Romans and Sabines, by obliging men, of similar occupations, to reside together. During a reign of forty years, he made it his constant study to preserve peace and promote the happiness of his subjects.

Q. Where were any important cities founded during his reign?

A. Syracuse, in Sicily; Crotona and Tarentum, in Italy, are supposed to have been built at this time.

Q. Who succeeded Numa?

A. Tullus Hostilius, a noble Roman, who was more warlike than Romulus.

Q. What memorable wars did Tullus engage in?

A. One with the Albans, which was decided by three twin brothers on each side. The Romans were called Horatii, and the Albans Curiatii. The Horatii were victorious; Alba was destroyed, and its citizens incorporated with the victors, which considerably enlarged and strengthened the Roman.

Q. Who first introduced the practice of admitting the vanquished to the rank of citizens?

A. Romulus established this wise policy to augment his subjects. It was followed, not only by his successors, but by the commonwealth. This, of course weakened the resistance of their opponents, who knew if they were vanquished they would be treated honourably. Rome, by extending her conquests, formed her soldiery; and, under Tullus, she began to learn that excellent discipline which rendered her, afterwards, mistress of the world.

Q. How long did Tullus Hostilius reign?

A. He reigned twenty-three years, and was succeeded by Ancus Martius.

Q. Who was king in Judea at this time?

A. Ammon, a very wicked prince, [B. C. 641;] who followed the example of the early part of Manasseh's reign, and became so hateful to his people, that the servants of his own family formed a conspiracy and slew him, after he had reigned two years.

Q. Were the people pleased with this act?

A. No; they condemned the murderers to be executed for the crime, yet they shewed their abhorrence of Ammon's wickedness by refusing him the honour of being placed in the sepulchre of the kings. He was buried in his own garden.

CHAP. XVI.

The history of Josiah and the neighbouring nations.

Q. Who succeeded Ammon?

A. Josiah, his son. The beginning of Josiah's reign is placed a year after Ammon's death, [B. C. 640;] because the odd months of the three last reigns above the round number of years which are placed to their reigns, amounted by this time, to a full year, which is reckoned here to complete the chronology.

Q. What memorable transaction took place in the reign of Phraortes, second king of Media?

A. In the sixth year of Josiah, [B. C. 635;] Phraortes having subdued all upper Asia, from mount Taurus to the

river Halys; and having added Persia to his dominions, thought himself in a condition to revenge his father's death on the Assyrians. He invaded the country with a formidable force, made himself master of the inferior cities, and laid siege to Nineveh, the capital of the empire. He was defeated before the walls of that great city, and perished with his whole army.

Q. Did Josiah follow the example of his father?

A. The gross depravity which had infected the inhabitants of Judah, during the short reign of Ammon, [B.C. 633;] and the infancy of Josiah, was so universal, that it required nothing less than a miracle to reform it. But Josiah had been promised, above three hundred years before his birth, to effect a complete reformation, and his conduct verified the prediction. In the eighth year of his reign, being then sixteen years of age, he took the administration of the kingdom into his own hands, and immediately issued orders for the demolition of all idolatrous statues and altars, and the pollution of every place which had been consecrated to heathen gods. To complete the work more fully, in the twelfth year of his reign, he made a tour through all the cities of Judah and Ephraim, (the whole land of Canaan being then subject to his government,) and caused all the graven images, vessels, chariots, and other subjects of superstition to be burnt, and those which could not be destroyed by fire, were thrown into the river Kidron. When he had removed all the abominations from Judah, he proceeded to Bethel, and destroyed the golden calf which had been erected by Jeroboam, together with the groves, idols, and altars. The bodies of the idolatrous priests were also dug up and burnt on the altar. A particular regard was, however, paid to the ashes of the prophet who had denounced to Jerusalem that destruction of idolatry which Josiah was now fulfilling. When he had finished the circuit through Judah and Israel, he returned to Jerusalem, and began to repair the temple and restore the regular worship of God.

Q. Who succeeded Phraortes in the kingdom of Media?

A. Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes. As soon as he was settled in the government, he collected all the force of his kingdom, and marched against the Assyrians, to be revenged for the death of his father. Having defeated them in battle, he led his forces to the siege of Nineveh.

Q. What prevented him from continuing the siege?

A. A formidable body of Scythians, from about the Palus Meotis, made an inroad into Media. Cyaxares left Nineveh:

and marched to defend his own kingdom. The Scythians gained a complete victory over him, dispossessed him of all upper Asia, and kept possession of it twenty eight years, during which time they enlarged their conquests into Syria, and as far as the borders of Egypt. Psammetichus, by paying them a large sum of money, prevailed on them to leave Egypt unmolested.

Q. Was Palestine infested by the ravages of these barbarians?

A. In their expedition to Egypt they seized on Bethshean, a city in the territories of Manasseh, and kept possession of it as long as they continued in Asia. From this circumstance it was called Scythopolis, or the city of the Scythians. But how far the ravages of these barbarians might affect Judea, is not known; probably the piety of Josiah protected his kingdom from their fury, for when a nation or its rulers please God, he maketh their enemies to be at peace with them.

Q. What other memorable transactions are recorded in the reign of Josiah?

A. In the thirteenth year of this reign, Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office, which he executed above forty years. In the fifteenth year, Chynaladanus, king of Babylon and Assyria, having, by his idolence and effeminacy, become contemptible to his people, Nabopolassar, who was general of his army, conspired against him, seized the throne of Babylon, and reigned twenty-one years.

Q. Did not Josiah make some further reformation in religion?

A. In the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah began to repair the house of the Lord. The high priest, at the king's command, made a thorough search of the temple to see what was necessary to be done; while he was strictly examining every place, he found the authentic copy of the law of Moses. This ought to have been laid up on the side of the ark, in the most holy place. This sacred work was taken from its proper place, it is supposed, in the time of Manasseh, and hid in an obscure part of the temple to save it from being destroyed by his sacrilegious hands.

Q. What did the high priest do with the book of the law?

A. He sent it to Josiah, who commanded it to be read in his hearing. The Jewish doctors affirm, that Shaphan the scribe, who was the person appointed to read to the king, opened in that part of the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, which contains the curses of God against the people

of Israel, and against the king in particular, who should disobey the law which he had commanded them. Josiah, on hearing these awful denunciations, rent his clothes, being filled with grief and terror, knowing how far both he and his people had transgressed God's holy law, and dreading the curses denounced against them who had thus offended.

Q. What steps did Josiah take to avert the judgments he feared?

A. He sent Hilkiah, the high priest, with several officers of his household, to Huldah the prophetess, and by her to inquire of the Lord how they might avert his just displeasure.

Q. What answer was given to the king's message?

A. The prophetess assured him, in the name of the Lord, that all these judgments denounced against Judah and Jerusalem for idolatry, and other abominations, should assuredly take place; but, in consequence of Josiah's reformation, the execution of these judgments should be delayed till after his death.

Q. Did this answer quiet the mind of Josiah?

A. It removed his immediate fears, but did not lessen his anxiety to perform every duty required by the law. He summoned a general assembly, at Jerusalem, and caused the law of God to be read to them; after the reading was finished, both king and people entered into a solemn covenant to keep the commandments of the Lord, to obey his statutes, with all their heart, and to perform all the words of the covenant written in the book of the law. The king and his people then celebrated the passover with greater strictness and solemnity than had ever been observed since the time of Samuel the prophet. After this, Josiah made another search through the land to purge it of the remaining corruption. He banished all those who pretended to have intercourse with familiar spirits and wizards, from the land, and destroyed every remaining vestige of idolatry.

Q. Had not the king and priests heard the law of God till they found the book in the temple?

A. It seems, by their behaviour, they neither of them had a full knowledge of it till they found that copy in the temple. Though Hezekiah kept scribes on purpose to collect copies of the holy scriptures, yet, through the iniquity which abounded during the reigns of Manasseh and Ammon, they had been either destroyed, or so mutilated, that few, if any, were fully acquainted with the extent and strictness of the divine law.

Q. Will you inform me of the state of Greece since the reign of Manasseh?

A. The Athenians chose their Archons annually; [B. C. 687.] They also increased the number to nine. The chief of the nine was called the Archon, and gave his name to the current year.

Q. How did Rome flourish under Ancus Martius?

A. He proved a wise and warlike prince; he subdued the Latins who invaded his dominions, and beautified the city with many useful edifices. He also built a seaport, called Ostia, at the mouth of the harbour, and a prison which was not much wanted till his reign. Ancus died after a prosperous reign of twenty-four years. About this time Josiah was making his great reformation in Jerusalem.

Q. What other memorable events took place in Josiah's reign?

A. In the twenty-ninth year of Josiah's reign, [B. C. 612.] Nabopossaser, king of Babylon, and Cyaxares, king of Media, formed an alliance with each other. Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopossaser, married the grand daughter of Cyaxares. These two kings, with united forces, attacked the Assyrians, took Nineveh, slew the king, and utterly destroyed that great city. By this destruction of Nineveh, the prophecies of Jonah, Nahum, and Zepheniah, were fulfilled. And we are told in the book of Tobit, that his son Tobias lived to hear of the fall of this wicked city.

Q. Has not Nineveh been rebuilt?

A. There was another city erected out of the ruins of old Nineveh which, for a long time, bore the same name, but it never attained to the grandeur of old Nineveh. Babylon being made, by Nabopossaser, the capital of the whole empire, drew all the wealth of the country to that place. The new city of Nineveh is now called Mosul, and is situated on the west side of the river Tigris, where were anciently only the suburbs of Nineveh.

Q. How were the Scythians driven out of Asia?

A. The Medes finding them too powerful to be reduced by arms, had recourse to treachery. They pretended great friendship for them; a pretended alliance was formed between the two nations; the Medes invited the Scythians to a feast made in each family. The guests were made drunk by the masters of the feast, and in that condition massacred. The Medes then repossessed themselves of the provinces they had lost, and once more extended their dominion to the banks of the Halys. The remaining Scythians, who were

not at the banquet, fled into Lydia, where they were received with great humanity by Halyattes, king of the country.

Q. Did not this occasion a war between the two nations?

A. Cyaxares immediately led his forces to the frontiers of Lydia. Many battles were fought during the space of five years. An eclipse of the sun happened during the last engagement, which so terrified the combatants, who considered it as a sign of the anger of the gods, that they immediately retreated, and soon after made peace. This eclipse was foretold by Thales the Milesian; it happened on the 10th of September, B. C. 601. Artiapes, the eldest son of Cyaxares, married the daughter of Halyattes.

Q. How long did Psammetichus reign in Egypt?

A. He died in the 24th year of Josiah, after a reign of fifty-four years, and was succeeded by his son Necus, called Pharaoh Necho, in scripture.

Q. What great acts are ascribed to this monarch?

A. He made an attempt to cut a canal between the Nile and the Red Sea. After destroying a hundred and twenty thousand men in the work, he was obliged to abandon the undertaking. It was under the direction of this monarch that the voyage was made round the cape of Good Hope to the East Indies. This voyage was performed by Phenician sailors, in the service of Necho, and must be considered a very extraordinary expedition, considering they were unacquainted with the use of the magnet. This voyage was made 2,100 years before that of Vasquez de Gama.

Q. What other important events took place in this reign?

A. After the Babylonians and Medes had destroyed Nineveh, they became so formidable as to excite the jealousy of the neighbouring nations. Necho, in the thirty-first year of Josiah, marched with a large army to invade their territories. Necho marched his forces towards the borders of Judea. Josiah resolved to impede his march; collecting all the strength of his kingdom, he posted himself in the valley of Megiddo, to stop his passage. Necho sent ambassadors to Josiah, assuring him that he had no design to invade Judea, and advised him not to engage in a war which might greatly injure his kingdom. But Josiah, either not believing his assertions, or thinking himself bound to take arms in favour of the king of Babylon, refused to retire. A battle ensued, Josiah was defeated in the engagement and mortally wounded. His servants removed him from the field of battle, and attempted to carry him to Jerusalem; he expired

before he reached the city, having reigned thirty-one years [B. C. 610.]

Q. Was he as much lamented as so virtuous a prince deserved?

A. Though the people refused to follow his example; they were fully sensible of the loss of so worthy a prince, and paid him every mark of honour at his death. Jeremiah the prophet, composed a lamentation on the occasion, which was sung by the youth of both sexes, in chorus with the prophet. This elegy has not been preserved.

Q. Has not Josiah been blamed for engaging in battle with Necho?

A. Some writers have presumed to censure his conduct, but without foundation. Necho made use of the name of God in his message to Josiah. But it is not probable that he had received any commission from Heaven. Sennacherib made use of the same expressions to Hezekiah; but that good king did not regard them. If Josiah was at all blameable, it was in not consulting the Lord before he undertook to defend his kingdom. As the scripture is silent on that head, we do not know that he failed in that point of duty. His death seems a rebuke to the Jews, who were undeserving of so wise and good a prince, rather than a punishment to Josiah; for what prince would be accused of engaging in an unjust war with an enemy, who had marched a formidable army into the heart of his kingdom without permission, and with an avowed intention to attack his ally, whose territories he most probably was bound, by contract, to defend.

Q. Who succeeded Josiah?

A. Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, was crowned by the people of Judah, but his reign was of short continuance. Necho having gained a victory over the Medes and Babylonians, returned to Judea, took Jerusalem, dethroned Jehoahaz, and placed his brother Jehoiakim on the throne. He laid an annual tribute on the land of 52,200 pounds sterling.

Q. What became of Jehoahaz?

A. Necho carried him to Egypt, where he died in captivity. This prince did not possess the piety of his father Josiah.

Q. Let us now return to the Romans who succeeded Anus Martius.

A. Tarquin, the elder, who was the son of a rich merchant of Corinth; he was born at Tarquinii, in Tuscany, and settled in Rome, expecting to rise to a post of honour in a city

where merit, not high birth, procured respect. He changed his name of Sublicus, into that of Tarquinius, borrowed from the place of his nativity.

Q. By what means did he obtain the crown?

A. Substantial merit, supported by wealth and skilful policy, with the favour of Ancus, procured a place in the senate. Ancus, when dying, appointed him guardian to his two sons, the eldest of whom was not fifteen. Though the crown was not hereditary, yet respect for the last king might have determined the suffrages of the people in favour of his family; but Tarquin, without regarding the interests of the youth confided to his care, openly solicited for the sovereignty. By his eloquence and a judicious distribution of his wealth, he prevailed on the people to choose him king.

Q. How did he govern?

A. Though he gained the kingdom by intrigue, he governed it with equity. To increase his influence in the senate, he created a hundred new senators from plebeian families. He gained the favour of the populace by building a circus for public games, after the model of the Greeks: he gained repeated victories over the neighbouring kingdoms: he improved his victories by incorporating the vanquished among the citizens of Rome, as had been the practice of his predecessors. He instituted the pompous ceremony of a triumph, which became so powerful an incentive to emulation. The works of Tarquin were prodigies in a barbarous age.

Q. What were the chief of those works?

A. The most useful was an aqueduct for supplying the city with water, and common sewers, which were so large that a waggon loaded with hay could pass under the vault. As the territory of Rome did not extend, at this time, above sixteen miles in any direction, these sewers, if built by Tarquin, must have been for the accommodation of cattle and recesses of banditti. Some have supposed, from the magnitude of the work, that these sewers were the remains of some ancient city, on the ruins of which Rome was built. They were so large that the repairing and keeping them in order was considered, even in the days of Augustus, as a difficult work. Agrippa is said to have turned the course of seven rivers into these subterraneous passages, to have made them navigable, and actually to have passed in barges under the streets of Rome. Tarquin also erected temples, halls for the administration of justice, and schools for the education of youth. He levelled the top of the Tarpeian rock on which the capitol was afterward erected.

Q. What change did Tarquin make in religion?

A. He introduced the Grecian superstition of foretelling future events by the flight of birds. The augurs were held in great reputation through succeeding generations. Foreign deities were admitted, and the simple religion of Numa almost entirely changed.

Q. How long did this monarch reign?

A. He was slain by the sons of Ancus Martius, who were incensed on seeing him pave the way for his son-in-law Servius Tullius, to the succession. Tarquin reigned twenty-eight years.

CHAP. XVII.

Laws of Solon; usurpation of Pisistratus; the seven wise men of Greece; the beginning of the Babylonish captivity.

Q. What memorable events can you relate of the Athenians?

A. Athens, for a long period, had no written laws; magistrates depended upon their own ideas of what was just or unjust. Their decisions were often capricious, for when rulers are wanting, every thing is arbitrary, and the consequent disorders shewed the necessity of having fixed laws. Draco, a virtuous archon, about 624 years B. C. was chosen to write a code of laws for the republic, but he run into an excess of severity.

Q. What were the laws of Draco?

A. All crimes, without distinction, he punished capitally. He alleged, in vindication of his severity, that the slightest punishment deserved death, and he could find no other punishment for the greatest offender; a most absurd maxim, which, under a pretence of banishing vice, must annihilate society. Even an inanimate thing, such as a statue, if it had been the cause of a man's death, was prosecuted and carried out of the state with execrations. This was done to inspire men with a detestation of murder, but it seemed rather to disgrace than to establish legislation. The laws of Draco being impracticable, destroyed themselves. This bloody yoke being once broken, the Athenians became more licentious than before, and all good men looked with horror on the dangerous state of the nation.

Q. Whom did they look to as a saviour in this critical juncture ?

A. They chose Solon, a man eminent for wisdom and moderation, as their legislator. He was of high birth and had made great progress in the study of philosophy, which at that time was of the kind which improved men in politics. He was an amiable man and a good citizen, for he refused royalty which was offered him, thinking the Athenians would be more happy under a well regulated republic, than a monarchy. He was unwilling to take upon himself the responsible office of legislator : but being exceedingly urged by all parties, he at last consented.

Q. What different parties divided the republic ?

A. The mountaineers, who were poor, wished for a democracy : the rich inhabitants of the plain preferred aristocracy : those on the sea coast insisted on a mixed government, compounded of these two forms blended together. A fourth party which consisted of persons in extreme poverty, were determined to choose themselves a chief, who should deliver them from the inhuman severity of their creditors, and make an entire change in the form of government, by a new division of lands. Solon had the glory of gaining the confidence of all parties. He was chosen Archon, and was constituted supreme arbiter and legislator by the unanimous consent of the nation.

Q. Will you relate some of the most important laws of Solon ?

A. He first repealed all the laws of Draco, except that against murder. [B. C. 610.] He then proceeded to the regulation of offices : he divided the people into classes according to their wealth. From the three highest classes, the magistrates and all the officers of government were chosen. The class of poor citizens had a right to vote in the assemblies of the people. To this assembly of the people all causes might be appealed ; which gave them an undue influence in public affairs. All important questions relating to peace and war, were determined in the assembly of the people.

Q. What entitled a man to be a citizen of Athens ?

A. He must be of Athenian extraction, both in the male and female line. No foreigner, let his merit be ever so great, could be admitted to the rank of citizen, unless he forever abandoned his native country, and was chosen by ballot, in a full assembly of the people. These regulations excluded nearly one half of the freemen from voting in the assemblies

of the people, and as the slaves which were four times the number of the free inhabitants of Attica, never voted on any occasion, their assemblies were not so numerous and tumultuary as might have been expected. Yet their numbers, impetuosity and ignorance, must have proved inconsistent with good government, if Solon had not secured public tranquility, by two tribunals of great dignity and extensive power.

Q. What were the courts which served as a check upon the people ?

A. One was the Senate, composed of four hundred men, a hundred from each tribe. All causes were first examined by this council, before they were proposed to the people.— This council was too numerous to deliberate with prudence, and had not a sufficient ascendancy over the multitude. The common assemblies were held almost every week, where every citizen of fifty years of age had the privilege of speaking, so that the talents of a corrupt and seditious orator, might easily overpower the prudence of the Senators, who had only a right to propose the business of the meeting. I am surprised, said Anacharsis the Scythian to Solon, to see that with you, the wise men have only the privilege of consulting, while fools have the power of determining.

Q. What other court had a check on the people ?

A. The Areopagus, which had been almost annihilated by Draco, was re-established with all its ancient dignity. To this court was committed the inspection of all public affairs ; the execution of the laws, and the education of youth. Before Solon's time any citizen of rank might be admitted as a member ; but he allowed none who had not been a senior Archon to preside in this august assembly. This assembly, though highly respected, was not a sufficient barrier against popular commotion.

Q. Who were the chief magistrates of Athens ?

A. The Archons were not removed ; their number was increased to nine. The first in rank gave his name to the year, and presided in the civil courts of justice. The Archons next in dignity had the superintendence of things relating to religion. The third presided over all military matters. The other six examined into criminal causes, and had the direction of the courts where they were determined.— These nine Archons were at the expiration of their annual office accountable to the people, and their conduct underwent a severe scrutiny.

Q. Did Solon accomplish any plan for the relief of the poor ?

A. He was sensible that the soul of popular estates is equality; but for fear of disgusting the rich, he did not attempt to distribute the lands equally among the people, as Lycurgus had done at Sparta. He ventured to make a law which emancipated those unhappy citizens who had been obliged to sell themselves to their creditors as slaves. He also made a law which discharged all debtors from obligation to their creditors.

Q. Was not that law productive of much evil?

A. It was. When Solon first proposed the law, he was sensible that it was contrary to justice, and would meet with much opposition; but willing to do something to remedy the evils of the poor, he introduced it with a preamble, setting forth the necessity of the edict. The law might have been received with little commotion, but some of Solon's counsellors, who had been previously informed by him of his intention, had the baseness to borrow large sums of money to purchase land, which they knew they would not have to repay by the new edict. This flagrant dishonesty cast a shade of ignominy on the character of Solon, who was entirely innocent; and it was a considerable time before he regained his popularity, though he sacrificed a great part of his own fortune to indemnify the injured.

Q. What were the particular laws of Solon?

A. They were far superior to his general form of government. To inspire a mutual interest in each other's welfare, he ordained that any citizen might prosecute a person, who did injury to another. Where the public peace was broken, every citizen was obliged to join one party or the other, on pain of perpetual banishment. Solon expected by this edict to oblige the wise and prudent to take an active part in settling the disputes of the state. He gave liberty for people to dispose of their property by will. Any man convicted of leading an idle life, after the third accusation, was reckoned infamous. Every person was obliged to give an account to the Areopagus of his means of subsistence. If a son foolishly wasted his father's property or refused to support his parents, he was likewise declared infamous: but if they had not bred him to some business, he was neither obliged to maintain them, nor subject to the penalties of this law. Women brought no fortune to their husbands, except they were the only children of their parents; otherwise they were not allowed to carry but three suits of apparel, and a few articles of household furniture of small value. A citizen, who frequented the company of dissolute women, was excluded from speaking in the public assemblies of the people; be-

cause, by his manners he had rendered himself unworthy of confidence. An Archon guilty of drunkenness was punished with death. Children whose parents were killed in the service of their country, were maintained at the public expense till they were twenty-one years of age. Any person who accused another, and had not a fifth part of the votes in his favor, was obliged to pay a heavy fine. The Areopagus had the power of revising the sentences of the people: if they supposed a person had been unjustly acquitted, they had the power of bringing him to a second trial before the people, or if he was unjustly condemned, they deferred the sentence till the cause was re-examined. A very extraordinary law existed called ostracism, by which the most illustrious men of the republic, upon mere suspicion, were banished for ten years. This was not intended as a disgraceful punishment, but by way of precaution, least any one should become so popular as to endanger the state; six thousand votes were required to banish a person, when the number of citizens did not exceed twenty thousand.

Q. Was the ostracism instituted by Solon?

A. Both the date and author of this political institution are unknown. In some cases it might be useful, but was generally productive of evil, by giving cabal and envy an opportunity of triumphing over virtue.

Q. Were there no other laws of Solon's worth remembering?

A. He lessened the value of the rewards bestowed on the victors at the public games, considering the money usually given to prize fighters better employed in supporting the widows and orphans of those brave men who had perished in defending their country. He prohibited speaking ill of the dead. No one was allowed to give a provocation or use ill language in any public assembly, or in the temples, courts, or even the theatre.

Q. Were the Athenians satisfied with his laws?

A. Before the death of Solon, that fickle people discovered their national character, by proposing to him every day some alteration. He was so disgusted with their importunity, that he quitted his native country for ten years, having first exacted an oath from the people that they would obey his laws during that time.

Q. Were the laws of Solon considered equal to those of Lycurgus?

A. They do not bear so high a reputation. Solon was sensible that his laws might have been much better, if he

could have formed them without consulting the prejudices of the different parties which composed the Athenian republic. He observed they were the best the Athenians were capable of receiving. Defective as they were, they would have rendered the nation much happier, had they been fully observed. For instance, that excellent law which secluded a man from speaking in the assemblies of the people, if he associated with dissolute women, would, had it been observed, have prevented the ascendancy which it is well known courtezans had at Athens. Women, far from enjoying that rank in society which Solon's laws would have given them, were in a very degraded state. Their minds being left uncultivated, they lost that influence in society, which sensible and virtuous women should possess. Courtezans, who were better educated, had power at once dangerous to domestic peace and purity of manners. Hence the Athenians, who were the most enlightened, became also one of the most dissolute people in Greece.

Q. What passed in Athens while Solon was absent ?

A. Several parties attempted to place their leaders at the head of affairs, but the one formed by Pisistratus finally prevailed.

Q. Who was Pisistratus ?

A. He was a relation of Solon's. Rich, generous, popular, he gained the hearts of the citizens by his splendid talents and deceitful caresses. Solon on his return from his travels, immediately penetrated his purposes, and said to him, were it not for your ambition you would be one of the best of the Athenians. It is not uncommon to see virtues changed into vices by this passion. Pisistratus forfeited his honour that he might rise to power.

Q. What particular meanness was he led to commit ?

A. He wounded himself with his own hand, and running into the streets covered with blood, implored the protection of the people ; his enemies, he pretended, had made an attempt upon his life. One of his accomplices immediately proposed that a guard should be appointed to protect the person of so valuable a citizen. The proposal was acceded to. Pisistratus soon after augmented the number to a force sufficient to possess himself of the citadel and establish his authority.

Q. Was no one found bold enough to oppose his designs ?

A. Solon opposed them from the first. He endeavoured in vain to rouse the people to a love of liberty ; and when the usurper one day sent to know what had inspired him

Rz

with such rashness, he replied, my old age. At last, not being able to endure the melancholy prospect of what he considered the ruin of his country, he bid an eternal adieu to Athens, and died at a very advanced age.

Q. What character has the generality of historians given of Solon?

A. All have been loud in his praises. The noble desire of seeking instruction attended him through life. *I grow old,* said he, *learning many things.* Some verses of gallantry which he composed in his youth, are the only things alleged against him. His many virtues and constant labour for the public good, justly rank him among the seven wise men of Greece.

Q. Who were the others that obtained that honorable distinction?

A. Thales, the Milesian, was considered the first: he laid the foundation of philosophy in Greece. He was the first of the Greeks who studied astronomy. He understood the science sufficiently to calculate eclipses. He fixed the duration of the solar year among the Grecians. He discovered an easy and certain method of calculating the height of a pyramid by its shadow. To shew that philosophy was useful in the common transactions of life, he purchased the fruit of all the olive-trees in the territory of Miletos before they were in blossom. The profound knowledge he had of nature, enabled him probably to foresee that the year would be extremely fertile. It proved so in effect, and he made a considerable profit by his speculation.

Q. Who was the second?

A. Solon, and Chilo of Lacedemon, the third. He was asked by Esop, how Jupiter employed himself. Chilo replied, in humbling those that exalt themselves, and exalting those that abase themselves. Yet he was destitute of true humility himself. He died of joy at Pisa, upon seeing his son win the prize in boxing at the Olympic games. He said when dying, he was not conscious of having committed any fault during the whole course of his life, unless it was once having used dissimulation, in giving judgment in favor of a friend, in which action he did not know whether he had done well or ill. Pittacus of Mitylene was the fourth. He, with Alceus, the famous lyric poet, united with a party of exiles and drove the tyrants, who had usurped the government, out of the island of Lesbos. The inhabitants of Mitylene being at war with Athens, gave Pittacus the command of the army. To spare the blood of the citizens, he challenged Phrynon, the Athenian general, to end the war by a single combat.—

The challenge was accepted. Pittacus was victorious and killed his adversary. The Mitylenes, with unanimous consent, conferred the sovereignty of the city upon him. He accepted the office, and conducted with so much wisdom and moderation, that he was always respected and beloved by his subjects. Alceus, who was a warm republican, did not spare Pittacus in his writings. The poet fell afterwards into the hands of Pittacus, who treated him with the utmost kindness, and restored him to liberty. After having reigned ten years with equity, he resigned his authority. One of his maxims was, that the subjects should be more afraid for their prince, than of him; another, that no man should speak evil even of an enemy. Bias was another of the wise men.— He was a native of Priene. This city was besieged by the king of Lydia, and being hard pressed by famine, Bias caused two mules to be fattened, and contrived to have them pass as if by accident through the enemy's camp. The good condition they were in astonished the king. He sent ambassadors into the city, on pretence of offering terms of peace, but really to observe the condition of the town. Bias suspected their intention, and ordered the granaries in the market to be filled with sand, and then covered over with corn. The ambassadors returned and made report of the great plenty of provision they had seen in the city. The king despairing of success concluded a treaty, and raised the siege. One of the maxims Bias taught was, to do all the good we can, and ascribe all the glory to the gods. Cleobulus was a native of Lindos, in the island of Rhodes. We know little of him. Periander was king of Corinth. He made his court respectable by the patronage he gave to wisdom and learning. He invited all the wise men to meet in his capital, where they conversed on political and scientific subjects. Anacharsis the Scythian is sometimes reckoned among the wise men. Esop, the famous author of the fables, so well known, was also considered one of the number. He taught true wisdom in his writings, and though he was a slave and greatly deformed, was very much respected. The Athenians erected a noble statue to this learned and ingenious slave.

Q. At what period were the laws of Solon established?

A. 610 years before the christian era.

Q. What passed in Judea during the reign of Jehoiakim?

A. This king, who ascended the throne 609 years before Christ, followed the example of his brother, in all evil. He relaxed the discipline his father had established. The people, ever prone to change with their rulers, and whose natural inclinations led them to idolatry, soon lost all appearance

of virtue. The prophet Jeremiah was sent to warn them of the sad consequences of sin. He first addressed the king, and informed him of the calamity which would overtake him and his family, unless he repented and reformed his life. After that he went into the temple, and addressed the people who came there to worship, declaring that God would assuredly destroy the temple and city, unless they turned from their evil courses, and, by true repentance, deprecated the wrath of the Almighty.

Q. Did the people listen to the prophet's warning?

A. No: the priests who officiated at the temple, seized Jeremiah and brought him before the king's council, intending to have him executed as a traitor. Ahikam, one of the chief lords of the council, exerted himself in Jeremiah's favour, and procured his discharge by the general suffrage not only of the princes who were then present, but the elders of the people.

Q. How came Ahikam to have so much power over the council?

A. His rank and family interest were very extensive. He was the son of Shaphan, the chief minister of state under Josiah. His three brothers, Gemariah, Elasah and Jaazaniah, were members of the council, and very eminent in the state. Gedaliah, who was afterwards made governor of the country, was the son of Ahikam.

Q. What treatment did Uriah, another prophet of the Lord, meet with?

A. He was sentenced to be put to death, for delivering a similar prophecy to that of Jeremiah. Uriah fled into Egypt, but that did not secure him from the revenge of Jehoiakim, who sent after him, and having found means to seize the prophet, had him brought back to Jerusalem and executed.

Q. What other prophets were cotemporary with Jeremiah?

A. Habakkuk and Zephaniah.

Q. What events were preparing the way for the fulfilment of the prophecies delivered by Jeremiah and his cotemporaries against Judah?

A. Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, finding himself unable from his infirmities to cope with Necho, associated his son Nebuchadnezzar with him in the government, and sent him with an army to conquer Palestine.

Q. In what year did this take place?

A. Towards the end of the third year of Jehoiakim.— [B.C. 607.] The Jews date the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign from this period. The Babylonians date from the death of his father, two years later. Both these computa-

tions are mentioned in scripture, which if not attended to, gives rise to confusion of dates.

Q. What success had Nebuchadnezzar in his first expedition?

A. [B. C. 606.] He first marched to attack Necho, whom he defeated near the Euphrates. He then led his victorious army into Judea. On his approach the Rechabites, who according to the institution of Jonadab the son of Rechab, their father, had always abstained from wine, and hitherto lived only in tents, came to sojourn in Jerusalem, finding no security in the open country. The prophet Jeremiah took occasion at the command of God, to give a lesson of reproof to the Jews from the fidelity and simplicity, with which this people obeyed the commands, of their father, which is related in the 35th chapter of Jeremiah. Jeremiah delivered many prophecies this year to the Jews, for which they confined him in prison. Being prevented by his confinement from speaking to the people, he was commanded to write a full prophecy of all the judgments God was about to bring upon the nation, and deliver it to Baruch one of his disciples, to read to the people, on the great feast of expiation.

Q. Was Baruch allowed to read the roll?

A. He met with no opposition: whether the king and his principal officers were absent to defend the borders of the kingdom, or whether men's minds were softened by the approaching enemy, is not known. But Baruch being greatly alarmed by the threatenings conveyed in the roll, was comforted by a particular prophecy, which we have in the 45th chapter of Jeremiah.

Q. Had this prophecy any suitable effect on the minds of the people?

A. It does not appear that it had; the great feast of expiation was kept in the month Tizri, which answers to our September. Immediately after, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, and made himself master of it in the month Chisleu, which is November. On the 18th day of that month he took the city, and having taken Jehoiakim prisoner, he bound him in chains, intending to carry him to Babylon. But on his humbling himself to Nebuchadnezzar, and submitting to become tributary, and swearing fealty to him, he was again restored to his throne; and Nebuchadnezzar marched with his army to complete his conquest in other parts of Palestine.

Q. Did not Nebuchadnezzar carry away captives at this time?

A. Before he left Jerusalem, he gave orders to Ashpenaz the governor of his household, to choose from among the royal family and the chief nobility, a number of young men

Betsy M. Jones,	-	-	-	Litchfield, Conn.
Mary H. Riley,	-	-	-	Goshen, do.
Olivia Very,	-	-	-	Marlborough, Vt.
Clarissa Ely,	-	-	-	Saybrook, Conn.
Catharine Webb,	-	-	-	New-York.

ERRATA.

- Page 14, 19th line from top, for shown read *shone*.
- 21, 20th do. do. for 2200 read 22,000.
- 22, 1st do. do. for 1800 read 18,000.
- 35, 20th line from bottom, for 2200 read 22,000
- 36, 4th do. do. for zealous read *jealous*.
- 43, 32d line from top, for 4200 read 42,000.
- 44, 7th do. from bottom, for Aphenenic read *Amphyctionic*.
- 47, 1st do. from top, for Albycene read *Mycene*.
- 64, 15th do. from bottom, for two husband men read *two husb*
- 92, 2d do. from top, for Rohathites read *Routhites*, [*dred men*]
- 93, 13th do. do. for professed read *possessed*.
- 104, 6th do. do. for, to the charge, read *to take the charge*.
- 106, 6th do. do, for family read *army*.
- 113, 17th do. do. for Gishon read *Gihon*.
- 114, 42th do. do. for his son read *this son*.
- 120, 123 and 128 pages, for counccillors read *counsellors*.
- 121, bottom line, for traveled-read *travelled*.
- 122, 16th line from bottom, for are read *were*.
- 124, 12th do. from top, for He read *It*.
- 132, 11th do. from bottom, for allusion read *illustration*. ~~Last~~
line same page, for Meaneler read *Menander*.
- 134, 10th do. from top, for trouble read *troubler*.
- 140, 11th do. from bottom, for disease read *discease*.
- 145 and 148 pages, for Jewry read *Troy*.
- 145, 2d line from bottom, for its read *and*.
- 148, bottom line, for Jacbus, king of Mansitania, read *Jarbas*,
king of Maurilania.
- 162, 9th do. do. for careful read *useful*
- 166, 6th do. do. for Aristoclates read *Aristocrates*.
- 176, for capitol read *capital*—for Beloris read *Belesis*—for Nobopalassar, read *Nabopolassar*.
- 180, 25th line from top, for it read *they*—10th line from bottom,
for to read *as*. [*people*]
- 189, 9th do. from top, for the kings people, read *the king and*
- 191, 2d and 10th do. do. for Prammetichus read *Psanmetichus*.
- 192, 21st do. do. for Soasduchinus read *Saosduchinus*.
- 195, 9th do. do. for [B. C. 668] read 648.
- 197, 19th do. from bottom, for Jerusalem read *Jeroboam*.
- 200, 18th do. do. from top, for Naboposslosar read *Nabopolassar*.
- 201, 10th do. do. for Miltisian read *Milesian*.
- 201, 11th do. do. for Artiapes read *Astyages*.
- 203, 2d do. do. for Sucumo read *Tucumon*.
- 205, 12th do. from bottom, for bandittis read *banditti*.

1

